National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND SATIRE: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND FLOWERS IN THE MIRROR

BY

PING PING LEE

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 1993

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-82002-0

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: PING PING LEE

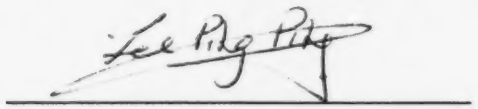
TITLE OF THESIS: REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND SATIRE: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND FLOWERS IN THE MIRROR

DEGREE: MASTER OF ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1993

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



Block G, 10/Floor
368 Queen's Road Central,
Welland Building,
Hong Kong

April 15, 1993

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND SATIRE: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND FLOWERS IN THE MIRROR submitted by PING PING LEE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Dr. Milan V. Dimić, Supervisor

Dr. Karl S.Y. Kao, Co-supervisor

Dr. Edward D. Blodgett

Dr. Jennifer Jay

13 April 1993

Abstract

This thesis investigates the intricate relationship between literary genres and gender constructions from a feminist perspective. My textual examples are Jonathan Swift's (1667-1745) Gulliver's Travels and Li Ruzhen's (1763-1830) Flowers in the Mirror, both of which are important satiric works in their respective culture. Based on an essentially feminist theoretical framework, and guided by postmodern theoretical assumptions, this thesis examines the sexual/textual politics encoded in the two satiric works. After introducing the two texts in Chapter One, Chapter Two of this thesis offers a cross-generic reflection on the definitions of satire and a synopsis of gender theories. Chapter Three analyzes Swift's satiric attacks on women in Gulliver's Travels from a gender perspective. Chapter Four reveals how Li's manipulation of various satiric elements in Flowers in the Mirror reflects gender bias. In the conclusion, this study examines the cultural similarities and differences regarding the representation of womanhood in the two works. The focus of the present work is the interrelation between gender and genre, culture and nature, society and individuality.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who, in the course of my thesis writing, have given me assistance in different capacities. The staffs in the Rutherford Library have been most efficient and helpful in searching and securing research materials for my thesis. Thanks are also due to Gary Sherbert and Laird Taylor who read my manuscript. I appreciate their attention and insightful comments.

And to Dr. M.V. Dimić, Dr. K. Kao and Dr. J. Jay, special thanks are due for their prompt, critical and supportive response to my thesis. The secretaries in the Department of Comparative Literature also deserve thanks. I am especially grateful to Ekaterini Nikolarea who has been constant sources of encouragement and stimulation since the very beginning of my graduate studies.

It has been a pleasure to study in the amiable atmosphere provided by a truly humane community of scholars at the University of Alberta. Thanks for the rewarding experience.

David, thanks for your love, encouragement and understanding.

Papa and Mama, thanks for giving me life and providing me everything, both physical and spiritual.

To God be the glory.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgement

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Genre-gender Reflection

Chapter Three: The Sexual Monstrosity: Women in *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter Four: Liberal Confucianism and Gender Conflicts in *Flowers in the Mirror*

Chapter Five: Cross-cultural Comparison of the Sexual/Textual Politics in *Gulliver's Travels* and *Flowers in the Mirror*

Bibliography

Appendix

Chapter One: Introduction

Recently in the academic world, there have been many feminist deconstructions of the meanings of literary images. Such critical practices engender a novel way of reading traditional literary works, Western and Eastern alike. An appealing object of such a new reading are Gulliver's Travels,[1] an eighteenth-century English satiric work, and Flowers in the Mirror (Jinghuayuan),[2] an early nineteenth-century Chinese social satire. The two works invite comparison in many respects, but they are especially interesting considered from a gender perspective. The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the representation and treatment of women in the two works from two different cultures, and to determine in what ways and to what extent they may have revealed similar patriarchal attitudes.

Despite the fact that almost one hundred years separate them in terms of their publication, and in spite of linguistic, geographic and cultural differences, Gulliver's

---

[1] Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Miriam Kosh Starkman. (New York: Bantham Books, 1986). All quotations are from this edition which "is substantially that of the 1735 edition; the punctuation has been somewhat modified, and capitalization and italics have been made conformable of modern usage".

[2] The Chinese version used in this thesis is from the 1992 edition of the book by Zhiyan chubanshe in Taipei. The English translation of the book Flowers in the Mirror by Lin Tai-yi in London, 1965 is not a complete translation from the original text. Yet it is by far the best English translation available.

Travels and Flowers in the Mirror bear a striking resemblance in their structural designs and thematic implications. After an examination and exploration of the generic features of both works, this study will attempt to demonstrate the cultural similarities and differences with regard to the concept of gender, and to identify and decode the sexist perspective embodied in them.

Before such an endeavour, a brief note on the social contexts of these writers is necessary for those readers not familiar with one or both of the two cultures. Jonathan Swift (1667-1747), the author of Gulliver's Travels, was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1667. Because of his father's early death, Swift had to depend on the charity of his father's friends in his childhood. After finishing university, Swift moved to England and worked as secretary to Sir William Temple, an important statesman and writer. While working for Temple, Swift met many prominent individuals and gradually attained intellectual maturity. In 1694, Swift was ordained as a minister in Dublin.[3]

Active in politics and religion, Swift wrote many pamphlets and essays in defence of his beliefs. Moreover, Swift produced literary works which reveal his perceptiveness and sensitivity with regard to the social problems besetting

---

[3] See John Middleton Murry, Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography, (New York: Noonday Press, 1955).

his contemporary England. For example, in A Tale of a Tub[4] (1699) he satirizes the pretensions of religion and learning in English society; in The Battle of the Books[5] (1699) he attacks the corruption of language; in A Modest Proposal[6] (1729) he criticizes the political hypocrisy which leads to poverty in England. From 1720 to 1726 Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels which received immediate acclaim from the public after its publication in 1726. Apart from works in prose, Swift also wrote numerous poems whose subject matters include human nature, social relations, politics, religions, to name a few.

The plot of Gulliver's Travels revolves around the protagonist Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon, his voyages to four bizarre places, and his experiences there. In Gulliver's first voyage, a violent storm drives him to the land of Lilliput whose inhabitants are no more than six inches tall. There Gulliver is regarded as the "man mountain" whose awesome physical power greatly amazes the minute race. Gulliver's next voyage is to the country of Brobdingnag, where he is a pygmy in comparison to the size of the gigantic inhabitants of this strange land. There Gulliver experiences both physical threats and humiliations due to his minuteness. Gulliver's next adventure is a voyage to the floating island of Laputa,

---

4 The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1937-74, vol. 1.

5 Ibid., vol. 1.

6 Ibid., vol. 12.

where the inhabitants are completely absorbed in intellectual and scientific pursuits. In this voyage, Gulliver also visits Balnibarbi, Glubbdubdrib, Japan, and Luggnagg where he encounters the Struldbrugs--a tribe of people who are physically immortal yet without lasting youth. Gulliver's last voyage centres on his visit to the land of the Houyhnhnms--a land inhabited by ultra-rational horses who are served by a despised, filthy, and degenerate human race known as Yahoos. In his association with the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver develops an immense affection for the horses. At the end, Gulliver returns home as an embittered misanthrope, hating the world and turning against everyone except his horses.

Swift's satire of social institutions in Gulliver's Travels resembles Li Ruzhen's (ca. 1763-1830) Flowers in the Mirror. A scholar of wide learning, Li lived and wrote during China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911). Although Li was knowledgeable in subjects such as philosophy, mathematics, phonetics, calligraphy, astrology and chess, his erudition and merits were not recognized by Chinese government officials due to his refusal to comply with their demand, which was to write the examination essay in a fixed style of composition called bagu wen.[7] Li had nothing to do but

---

[7] When literally translated, bagu wen means "eight-legged essay", which is composed of eight paragraphs and 600-700 characters in length. It was a prerequisite for the imperial civil service examination in Li's time. See Wayne Alt, "The Eight-Legged Essay: Its Reputation, Structure, and Limitation," Tamkang Review, 17, 2 (Winter 1986), pp. 155-174.

remained a phonetician by profession most of his life. Before his death, he completed three works: Yinjian (The System of Phonetics, 1805), Shouzipu (Handbook on Chess, 1817), and the literary work Jinghuayuan (Flowers in the Mirror, 1828).[8]

The political climate in which Li was living was marked by an immense tension between the Manchu government and its subjects. It was a period when the persecution of Chinese scholars by Manchu emperors was at its peak. Under the practice of literary inquisition, an innocent remark about Chinese history or an inattentive complaint could result in a death penalty. Because of the existing strict authoritarian control and literary censorship by the Manchu government, many scholars and intellectuals assumed an apathetic posture with regard to politics so as to avoid punishment for their speech or works. Thus the yearning for freedom and harmony, masked by a satirical tone, becomes a conspicuous trait of Flowers in the Mirror.

As an allegorical fantasy set in the Tang dynasty (618-907) during the reign of the Empress Wu Zetian (625-705), the book can be divided into four basic sections. The first part (chapters I-VI) provides the supernatural framework in which a hundred flower spirits, because of the failure to observe their duties, are banished from the heavenly realm into the mundane world to experience hardships and tribulations of

---

[8] For more information about Li's life and work, see Hsin-Sheng C. Kao, Li Ju-chen, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1980), p. 18.

humans. All of them are incarnated as mortal women with various intellectual, literary and military talents.

Part two (chapters VII-XL) revolves around the story of the scholar Tang Ao who, despite his success in the imperial examinations, is deprived of an official position because he was falsely accused of having connections with an earlier abortive uprising against Empress Wu who has usurped the throne from her own son.[9] His disillusionment with the government leads him to set out on an ocean voyage with the merchant Lin Zhiyang, his brother-in-law, and Old Duo, a Confucian scholar. Most of this section centres on the travellers' adventures in various extraordinary countries and their encounters with exotic people. In the course of the voyage, Tang Ao decides to renounce the world and disappears on a mysterious island.

Part three (chapters XLI-XCIV) relates a similar journey taken by Tang Ao's daughter, Tang Xiaoshan (who is actually the incarnation of the Fairy of the Hundred Flowers) in search of her father. After she discovers a stone tablet with the names of a hundred successful female examination candidates

---

[9] In Chinese history, Empress Wu was a concubine of the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty. She became a Buddhist nun after the emperor's death. However, her beauty attracted the emperor's successor so much that he disposed of the legitimate empress for Wu in the year 655 A.D. Later Wu removed the rightful heir and made her son Crown Prince. In 683 she became regent for her son after the demise of her second husband. In 690 she dethroned her son and became the first reigning empress of China and proclaimed a new dynasty, the Zhou Dynasty, which lasted from 690-705 AD.

inscribed prophetically on it, Tang Xiaoshan returns to China to take the imperial examination for women which was instituted by Empress Wu.

The fourth part (chapters XCV-C) is an account of how, after passing the imperial examination, the hundred incarnated flower spirits spend many days in festivity and engage in many games, quizzes and riddles. At the end of the novel, Empress Wu is overthrown and the Tang dynasty is restored once again.

By adopting the form of a travelogue and using the framework of peregrination, Li satirizes and criticizes various social institutions in nineteenth-century China. The fantastic, grotesque people and events which the central characters witness overseas not only exemplify Li's unfettered imaginative power, but also manifest his artistry in using wit and humour for satiric purposes.

In terms of the critical reception of the two works, it is important to compare how the gender relationships have been read throughout history. When Gulliver's Travels was first published in 1726, the book received immediate acclaim and it was read from the "cabinet-council to the nursery."[10] This implies that there was little or no negative reaction to Swift's unflattering depiction of females. Its satiric contents greatly appealed to the general public, and the

---

[10] See John Gay's letter to Swift on November 17, 1726 in The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift: 1724-1731, vol. iii, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 182.

spirit of the times called for travel literature because it was a period of very active colonization. To the children, then, the story of a naive Englishman visiting grotesque creatures in foreign lands was a charming fable.[11] To the adult readers, the book was heavily weighted with historical, political and social allusions which satirized the foibles, vices, and follies of humanity. However, there was a subversive subtext relating to gender relationships which seems to have remained unnoticed up to the advent of feminist literary scholarship. From a twentieth-century feminist perspective, the dangerous tendency of such texts is to create and reinforce stereotypes as well as maintain the existing power structure through the unquestioning acceptance by the reader of the lively humour. To some of Swift's contemporary intellectuals, Gulliver's Travels was a "moral political romance"[12] or even an "apologue."[13] Because of Swift's ingenious imagination and satiric wit, the work has survived through history and has been read on different levels with various generic and ideological approaches.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, one of the

---

[11] See Sarah Smedman "Like Me, Like Me Not: Gulliver's Travels as Children's Book," The Genres of Gulliver's Travels, ed. Frederik N. Smith (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), pp. 75-100.

[12] See Lord Orrey's Letter (1752) reprinted in part in Swift: The Critical Heritage, ed. Kathleen Williams, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1970), p. 121.

[13] See Thomas Sheridan's essay (1784), ibid., p. 226.

strong currents of philosophical thought stressed the essential goodness and rationality of man (not necessarily of woman), positing that social progress could be achieved through scientific advances and the application of human reason. This optimism about the perfectibility of man also influenced the general reception of the text. Most readers at that time thought Gulliver was a mouthpiece for Swift's opinions. Equating Gulliver with Swift, they labelled Swift a misanthrope who denied the positive qualities of human nature. William Thackeray, an influential nineteenth-century writer on Swift, criticizes the "moral" of the book as "horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous."[14] He advises his listeners to "hoot" Swift and not to read especially the fourth voyage because "it is Yahoo language: a monster gibbering shrieks, and gnashing imprecations against mankind--tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of manliness and shame; filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene."[15] Thackeray does not, however, specifically address or condemn Swift's treatment of women in his literary works. Although he describes the text as "unmanly", he does not bother to consider whether it is "unwomanly".

---

[14] See Thackeray's essay (1851) reprinted in The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century, (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 21.

[15] Ibid., pp. 21-2.

The issue of Swift's relationship with his fictional character continued to be a much debated subject for the early twentieth-century reader of Gulliver's Travels. However, in the early 1920s, many readers started to dissociate Swift's character and beliefs from those of Gulliver.[16] They no longer perceived Gulliver as Swift's alter ego, but viewed Gulliver as an ironic persona who functions as an instrument of satire in the text. In the 1930s and 1940s, with the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, readers interpreted the book, especially its scatological details, in relation to Swift's neurotic tendencies and sexual repression.[17] In the 1950s, the controversy over Swift's satiric representations of the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos were so potent that even different schools of interpretation were formed by readers who shared similar views.[18] Since the 1970s, with the advent of

---

[16] In 1926, T.O. Wedel argued that Swift held a traditional Christian view of man and was not a misanthrope. Wedel's view breaks away from the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century concern with Swift's character to analyze the literary and philosophical complexity of Swift's work. See his "On the Philosophical Background of Gulliver's Travels" in Studies in Philology, 23, 4 (1926), pp. 434-50.

[17] There have been numerous psychoanalytic readings of Swift. Norman O. Brown "The Excremental Vision," Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1959), pp. 179-201 is representative of this school of interpretation.

[18] The readers from the so-called "Soft" school of interpretation see the conclusion of Gulliver's Travels as essentially comic. They view the Yahoos as symbols of debased humanity, while the Houyhnhnms as representatives of Swift's ideals of rationality and order. The "Hard" school, however, insists that the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos are both

feminist literary scholarship, various literary critics have started to explicate the text from a gender perspective with the aim of "deconstructing dominant male patterns of thought and social practice; and reconstructing female experience previously hidden or overlooked."[19]

Indeed, throughout the history of its critical reception, Gulliver's Travels has elicited varying responses, depending on how readers place themselves vis-à-vis the character Gulliver. Even now, there are still disagreements about Gulliver's role in the text--whether he is meant to be a reliable narrator, a fictional protagonist, or a satiric object whose opinions are the object of Swift's ridicule. One undeniable fact is, however, that the complexity of the book has invited multiple approaches and generated divergent interpretations. Feminist scholarship has shown that the debate will not be exhausted as long as the work forms a part of world culture.

Similar to Gulliver's Travels, Flowers in the Mirror has also been subjected to different interpretations from its

---

satiric objects and representatives of the duality of human nature. See James Clifford "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage: 'Hard' and 'Soft' schools of Interpretation," Quick Springs of Sense: Studies in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Larry Champion, (Georgia: University Press, 1974), pp. 33-49.

19 Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, "Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman,"Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, eds., Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 7.

readers at various times in history. Like most Chinese classical texts, the book was first circulated among Li's close friends and relatives.[20] In 1828, the book was published and passed on to the general public. Although many readers found the book entertaining, they were disappointed by Li's overuse of classical erudition and indulgence in encyclopedic knowledge. This general response might explain why the book was not as popular as Cao Xueqin's Hongloumeng (Dream of the Red Chamber) which was published in 1765.[21]

Among Li's contemporary intellectuals, critical opinion agreed that the book contained didactic elements which affirmed Confucian morality and ethical codes. Xu Qiaolin, a scholar of Li's time, argued that the book "spread filial piety and loyalty; in accordance with the tradition of 'feng,' purifying hearts and customs";[22] it is as if the function of literature at the time were to reinforce stereotypes and acceptable social behaviour. Another Qing literary critic, Hong Liyuan, also comments that:

> Its meaning is apparent, its wording is elegant, its language is simple, while its idea is profound. It enlightens the young. It provides knowledge to

---

20 See Li Ju-chen, p. 28.

21 Wang Chi-chen, trans. Dream of the Red Chamber, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958).

22 See Xu Qiaolin, "Jinghuayuan xu," (Preface on Jinghuayuan) Zhongguo Lidai Xiaoshuo Lunzhu Xuan (An Anthology of Classical Novel Criticism of China), ed. Huang Lin, (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chuban she, 1982), p. 552.

> the scholars. Moreover, it rectifies unhealthy hearts and corrects social customs--wherein the author's deep concern resides.[23]

No concern for the position of women in Chinese society seems to have been shown by this critic.

With the collapse of China's last imperial dynasty in 1911 and the influx of Western thought, some readers, especially the intellectuals, began to approach the book from different ideological perspectives. Scholars such as Hu Shi and Lin Yutang viewed the central message of the text as echoing feminist ideals and goals. A similar view was held by another literary critic, Chen Wangdao, who suggested that the narrative reflects Li's wish that one day women would truly stand up and control their own fate in education.[24] This kind of pro-feminist viewpoint, nevertheless, gradually subsided. Questions arose as to whether the work was not in fact reinforcing traditional gender roles.[25] With the coming to power of the Communist regime in 1949, a novel approach to the book began to take shape among readers and literary critics in China. As Marxist ideology emphasizes the socio-

---

23 Ibid., p. 555.

24 Chen Wangdao, "Jinghuayuan de funü wenti" (Flowers in the Mirror and Women Problems), NuXinnian Yuehan, 13, 3 (March 1934), pp. 7-18.

25 F. Brandauer and C.T. Hsia both point out that Li is indeed a traditional Chinese scholar who celebrates the Confucian ideals of womanhood in the text. Cf. note 34 and 110.

political aspects of literature, the Chinese readers have been invited since 1949 to view the book as an attack on the darkness and backwardness in traditional Chinese feudal society. Xu Shinian and Li Changzhi, two prominent Marxist literary critics, credit Li's work as being an advocacy of sexual equality and the emancipation of women.[26] The latter argues that Li's satire elicits the impression of disjointedness and incoherence because the author tries to attack too many evils and to present too many of his ideals.[27] Li Changzhi further exalts Li's "thinking ahead of his time" and "[showing] a longing of new social relationship [sic]."[28]

In mainland China, critical opinions of the work continued to be influenced by Marxist philosophy, and in the past few decades, no consensus concerning the work's central ideas has been reached. One generally accepted view, however, is that Li's book is a social commentary on the intellectual and political milieu of his time. Chinese literary scholarship has been slow to react to western feminist thought; the

---

[26] See Xu Shinian, "Luetan Jinghuayuan" (A Brief Discussion on Flowers in the Mirror), Chungguo gudian xiaoshuo pinglunzhi (Beijing: Beijing Chu-ban She, 1957), pp. 156-69. Also Li Changzhi, "Some Notes on Flowers in the Mirror," Chinese Literature, 1 (January-February 1958), pp. 144-48.

[27] Li Changzhi, p. 147.

[28] Ibid., p. 148.

literary community is basically conservative.[29]

There have recently been only two particular works of scholarship on Flowers in the Mirror by overseas Chinese scholars. One is Leo Tak-hung Chan's "Religion and Structure in the Ching-Hua Yuan" in which Chan defends the aesthetic faults of the work as the result of Li's "ambitious attempt to embody in the text, in considerable breadth and depth, the religio-philosophical traditions of Confucianism and Taoism."[30] Another scholarly work is a Master's thesis by Aidong Zhang who, with a special interest in hermeneutics, observes that the various critical discourses on the Flowers in the Mirror are generated from specific cultural as well as socio-historical contexts.[31]No other work offers an exhaustive analysis of Flowers in the Mirror or brings Gulliver's Travels into the discussion.

Nevertheless, the structural, thematic and formal affinities between the two works are remarkable. Almost a century before Li, Swift uses the framework of an imaginary voyage abroad to express his criticism towards diverse fields

---

29 See Lydia H. Liu "The Female Tradition in Modern Chinese Literature: Negotiating Feminism Across East/West Boundaries," Genders, 12 (Winter 1991), pp. 22-44 for an insightful discussion of the problems of feminist studies in mainland China.

30 Leo Tak-hung Chan, "Religion and Structure in the Ching-Hua Yuan," Tamkang Review, 20, 1, (1989), p. 45.

31 Aidong Zhang, "Critical Discourses of Flowers in the Mirror," master thesis, Mcgill University, 1991.

of human endeavour such as politics, religion, education, ethics and social relations. The generic resemblances between the two works have at times attracted much scholarly interest. As early as the 1930s, the Chinese literary critic Hu Shi remarked that wit and humour in the Flowers in the Mirror are directed against the traditional subjugation of women in China and that the book is the Chinese version of Gulliver's Travels.[32] Although Hu sees Li's work as a feminist text, he fails to recognize the hidden masculine prejudice encoded in Li's treatment of Chinese women. In the 1970s and 1980s, literary critics such as Hengjun Yue, C.T. Hsia, P.H. Wang and A.O. Aldridge also commented on the similarities and differences of the two texts. While Yue focuses on Li's and Swift's different world views as manifested in their respective work from a philosophical perspective,[33] Hsia compares the distinctive attitudes of Tang Ao and Gulliver toward their own cultures through a thematic exposure of the two works.[34] Concentrating on the genre of utopia, A.O.

---

32 Hu Shi, "A Chinese 'Gulliver' on Women's Rights (the Jing-hua-yuan)," People's Tribune,n.s., 7 (1934), pp. 121-7.

33 Yue Hengjun, "Penglai guixishi: lun Jinghuayuan de shijieguan" (The Absurd Drama of Peng-lai: Comments on Flowers in the Mirror's World View"), Xiandai wenxue, 49 (Taipei, 1973), pp. 92-105.

34 C.T. Hsia, " The Scholar-Novelist and Chinese Culture: A Reappraisal of Ching-hua yuan," in Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays, ed. Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 266-305.

Aldridge argues that both works are utopian fictions.[35] In the same vein, P.H. Wang pays special attention to Li's and Swift's affinities in manipulating various utopian elements to bring out satiric themes.[36] Toward the end of the 1980s, Terry Siu-han Yip, a scholar from Hong Kong, points out that "not only do the two works share the same purpose of holding up a mirror to their contemporary countrymen, but they also employ similar literary devices such as imaginary journeys to places of wonder, and the juxtaposition of utopian and dystopian worlds, revealing the contrast between their social ideal and corrupt reality."[37] All of the above scholarship was focused on different aspects of Flowers in the Mirror and Gulliver's Travels; however, up to the present, the handling of the issue of gender by Li and Swift in their literary creations has not been given a full-scale, systematic analysis. This thesis, thus, proposes to show that in their treatments or representations of women, Li and Swift reveal much resemblance in their sexist bias and prejudice despite their geographical and cultural differences.

---

35 A.Owen Aldridge, "Utopianism in World Literature," Tamkang Review, 14, 1-4 (Autumn 1983-Summer 1984), pp. 11-29.

36 P.H. Wang, Utopian Imagination in Traditional Chinese Literature, Ph. D. diss. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980.

37 Terry Siu-han Yip, "The Juxtaposition of Utopia and Dystopia in Chinese and English Literature: A Comparative Study of Flowers in the Mirror and Gulliver's Travels," Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, vol. 2, (Munich, 1990), p, 471.

Chapter Two: Genre-gender Reflection

In analysing Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror, it is important to understand not only the meaning of satire in Western and Eastern cultures, but also the traditions and conventions within which Jonathan Swift and Li Ruzhen exercised their satiric art. In the West, satire up to the present remains a protean species of art of which critics and scholars have yet to reach a precise definition. The classical view, which persisted through the eighteenth century, stressed that the moral intent in satire is of central importance. In his A Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire (1693), John Dryden writes:

> Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended.[38]

Northrop Frye, however, maintains that the moral purpose is not necessarily the defining feature in a satirical work. In his opinion, the moral norms of satire are relatively clear. Satire implicitly sets standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured.[39] These standards may be explicitly

---

[38] See Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays, ed. George Watson, II (London, 1962), p. 143.

[39] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 223.

or implicitly stated in a literary work, but they nonetheless dominate the satiric author's technique and organizational principles. Frye further states that only two elements are essential to satire: "one is wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack."[40]

Another Western theory of satire is propounded by Robert C. Elliott, who advocates that the purpose of the satirist is to:

> expose some aspects of human behaviour which seem to him foolish or vicious, to demonstrate clinically that the behaviour in question is ridiculous or wicked or repulsive, and to try to stimulate in his reader ... the appropriate negative response which prepares the way to positive action.[41]

In his study of satire's traditional relation to myth, magic, and ritual, Elliott draws attention to its public functions. Under the banners of "truth, justice, and reason," the satirists use their work as a "moral weapon," thereby conveying their outlook on the human condition.[42] They are compelled to express any deviation from what they believe to be the truth, or justice; they wish to restore the balance, to correct or even to punish the wrongdoer. Patricia Meyer

---

40 Ibid., p. 224.

41 Robert C. Elliott, The Power of Satire, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), iii.

42 Ibid., p. 107.

Spacks, another critic, points out that Elliott's study suggests "the possibility that satire originated from the immediate desire to achieve psychic, military, political or social dominance."[43] A similar view is proposed by Alvin Kernan, who remarks that the parallels between aggression and satire lie in the fact that "the most elegant method of directing and managing aggression is ritualization, a process in which aggression is both expressed and channelled by certain rhythmic, formalized, and habitual actions."[44] Satire, he continues, may be seen as one of the ways "in which man has learned to control aggression and manage it to useful ends."[45] In this light, Swift's satire on humanity and social institutions can be seen as a means through which he releases his anger and presents his indictment of English society. Similarly, although Li was born into the upper class and instilled with ambition, he was unjustly cut off from political power because of his failure in the civil examination. Thus, Li's satiric work may also be seen as an

---

43 Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ronald Paulson, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 363.

44 Alvin Kernan, "Aggression and Satire: Art Considered as a Form of Biological Adaptation," in Literary Theory and Structure: Essays in Honor of William K. Wimsatt, ed. Frank Brady, John Palmer, and Martin Price (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 120.

45 Ibid., p. 121.

oblique expression of his disillusionment and bitterness.[46]

In the West it is generally recognized that the satirist represents the censure of established institutions or modes of behaviour. Stimulated by what he or she perceives to be perversion, incongruity and pretences--what Frye calls "the grotesque or absurd"--in society, the satirist strives for witty exposure; however, from an ethical point of view, he or she aims for reform. In a sense, the satirist is very much alive to the follies, imperfections and faults of men and women; he or she sees human beings falling short in one way or another of the standards to which society subscribes.

As for the content or subject matter of satire, politics, sexual relations, personal absurdity or social manners are all items for satiric treatment in the West. In fact, the materials under the satirist's ridicule are usually familiar subjects, but are treated in a new way or from a different perspective. As Leonard Feinberg points out, "it is not the originality of ideas that makes the great satires successful; it is the manner of expression, the satiric manner, which makes them entertaining and interesting, stimulating and

---

[46] See Paul S. Ropp, Dissent in Early Modern China: Ju-lin wai-shih and Ch'ing Social Criticism (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981). Ropp observes that in the late Ming and Qing periods, because of political, economic, social and religious factors, there was a marked rise in both the volume and intensity of social criticism in fiction.

refreshing."[47] To Feinberg, satire is "a playful critical distortion of the familiar"[48]; it always plays off what things are against what they ought to be.

Almost all satirists use the technique of humour for satiric purposes. By emphasizing what seems to be but is not, the satirist highlights the contrast between reality and pretence. That is to say, the reader is invited to see the familiar with a fresh outlook; he or she is asked to look beneath the surface of things and to reevaluate his or her habitual assumptions. In this way, not only does satire appeal to the reader's intellect, but it also generates critical humour: it ridicules human follies, sentimentality, vices and hypocrisy. The special strategies or narrative devices by which the satirist communicates his or her derisive spirit include verbal irony, mask-persona, burlesque, parody, allegory, and symbol.[49] These satiric elements appeal strongly to the reader, both on the intellectual and emotional level.

In Gulliver's Travels, irony is a vital facet of Swift's satiric method. By using Gulliver, the invented narrator, as the persona (or mask), Swift reveals the ambiguities and contradictions between appearance and reality. The overall

---

[47] Leonard Feinberg, Introduction to Satire, (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1967), p. 88.

[48] Ibid., p. 19.

[49] Ibid., p. 93.

ironic effect in the story is achieved through Gulliver, who gives the reader his perspective of his adventures, whereas Swift allows the reader to see Gulliver from other angles or in a different context. Indeed, irony is sustained to the end of the story where the "gullible" Gulliver, completely befuddled, prefers the company of horses to other men, even to his own family. Swift's ironic twist is that Gulliver worships reason, but is almost wholly devoid of critical thinking: while he attempts to live a life of pure reason, he loses it altogether.[50]

Similar to Swift, Flowers in the Mirror is also marked by Li's extensive use of irony to achieve satiric effects. In his depiction of the alien lands which the travellers visit, Li adopts an ironic stance, thereby exposing the frailties and stupidities of mankind. Moreover, in his use of images such as women as fairies, kings, intellectual genius, and by granting them the allied power, all of which act as contrasts to actual situations in Chinese society, Li brings his readers into a world which is contrary to their ordinary experience. In this respect, through exploiting the relationship between appearance and reality, both Swift and Li project a double vision and a second perspective of the world.

An important genre in Western literary history is called

---

[50] See F.R. Leavis, "The Irony of Swift" in Swift: a Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ernest Tuveson (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 15-30.

Menippean satire. Its origin goes back to the 3rd century B.C. in which the Greek cynic philosopher Menippos, being antagonistic toward his contemporary philosophical elites and formal schools, satirized the follies of men in a mixture of prose and verse.[51] In the 1st century B.C., the Roman scholar Varro adopted this literary form to publicize his philosophical ideas and called his satires "saturae menippeae."[52] Works like Lucian's Dialogues, Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel, Voltaire's Candide, Thomas Love Peacock's Nightmare Abbey, Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point and After Many a Summer also exhibit traces of Menippean satires.[53]

In terms of generic traits, the Menippean satire is characterized by a mixture of forms; it may be a medley of tales, songs, dialogues, orations, letters or lists. A mixture of prose and verse, flagrantly digressing narrative, the rampant display of learned trivia, exaggeration of arguments, inversions of ordinary worldly values and

---

51 See Eugene P. Kirk Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980); Mikhail Bakhtin's Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, trans. P.W. Rotsel, 1973, pp. 92-100; and Leon Guilhamet Satire and the Transformation of Genre, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), pp. 4-6 for the tradition of this kind of satire.

52 Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, p. 92.

53 See A Dictionary of Literary Terms, 3rd ed. J.A. Cuddon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 539-40.

outlandish vocabulary are all within the Menippean genre.[54] Most Menippean satirists are fond of playing with ideas and one of the dominant features of this form is the motif of violation. That is to say, the Menippean satirists endeavour to upset the generally accepted or ordinary course of events. Their focus is the overturn of established norms of behaviour and etiquette.[55]

Regarding thematic concerns, Menippean satires are interested in right learning or right belief.[56] Assuming their audience to be less learned and intellectually committed than they are themselves, the Menippean satirists consider it their mission to educate their audience in an entertaining way. As Bakhtin points out, the aim of Menippean fiction is to "create extraordinary situations in which to provoke and test a philosophical idea."[57] Therefore the topical elements used by Menippean satirists usually include fantastic voyages, dreams, visions or talking beasts.[58] Within the fantastic story structure, the central characters wander through imaginary lands to verify or affirm the satirist's philosophical position. In this way, the Menippean satire is

---

54 Menippean Satire, xxvii.

55 Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, p. 96.

56 Menippean Satire, xi.

57 Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, p. 94.

58 Menippean Satire, xi.

a specific literary genre which invites its readers to identify with the writers's intellectual concerns. As Bakhtin says, it is a genre of "ultimate questions."[59]

In this thesis, in view of the satiric tone, ironic temper and multiple genres in Gulliver's Travels, I would claim that the work is a Menippean satire. As for the Chinese counterpart, given the book's multi-faceted structure, miscellaneous form, and episodic quality, I would also propose that it is, if not a Chinese Menippean satire, at least a social satire which displays Li's immense encyclopedic knowledge, intellectual concerns and philosophical postures.

In Chinese literary criticism, the term satire is composed of two characters--feng and ci. The etymology of feng can be traced back to early Chinese poetry in which it signified "prevailing mood," "wind" or "influence."[60] In most cases, feng appeared in the context of social relationships, including how the subordinates tried to persuade their superiors to reform the existing political system. Ci, on the other hand, means "prodding," "poking" or "needling." It carries the connotation of hurt and inducement of pain. Thus together feng-ci in Chinese denotes the sense

---

[59] Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, p. 95.

[60] See Donald A. Gibbs, "Notes on the Wind: The Term 'Feng' in Chinese Literary Criticism," Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture, (Hong Kong: Cathay Press, 1972), pp. 285-93.

of critical persuasion and the awakening of the insensitive.[61]

In examining the satiric tradition in Chinese literature, F. R. Brandauer notes that feng means "to use a subtle form of language to criticise or ridicule;" and ci means "to pierce, to stab, to irritate, or to hurt."[62] With reference to ancient Chinese sources, this critic argues that, as with the English word satire, there are two assumptions associated with the Chinese compound feng-ci. First, there is a subject which is to be attacked. Secondly, the attack leads to ridicule.[63] Brandauer's thesis is that there are minor variations of emphasis between feng-ci and satire: while the Chinese word stresses the subtle and indirect nature of the attack, the English counterpart is more geared to the humorous effects generated. Agreeing with Timothy Wong's observation,[64] Brandauer points out that feng-ci and satire are essentially the same in Western and Eastern traditions.

It is important to note that feng-ci in Chinese fiction

---

61 See Timothy C. Wong, Wu Ching-tzu, (Boston: Twayne, 1978) for a careful study of the generic term "satire" as well as its Chinese counterpart feng-ci, its techniques and rhetoric.

62 F. R. Brandauer, "Realism, Satire, and the Ju-lin wai-shih," Tamkang Review, 20, 1, (1989), p. 10.

63 Ibid., p. 11.

64 See Wu Ching-tzu, p. 53, where Wong writes: "because of the essential identity of meaning twentieth-century Chinese have used this compound as the equivalent of Western word 'satire'."

also appears in the form of humour or wit. The Chinese satirists use humour as a means of attacking social or individual iniquities. They intend to incite or stimulate the reader to adopt the moral position or value systems in which they believe. Like their Western counterparts, the Chinese satirists communicate their messages through rhetorical techniques such as burlesque, invective, parody, irony, and exaggeration by magnification or diminution.[65]

In A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, the twentieth-century Chinese literary critic Lu Xun points out that before Wu Jingzi's The Scholars (Rulinwaishi), which was first published in 1803, there was not actually a novel of social satire.[66] A sustained piece of satire in a fictional mode, The Scholars[67] is a collection of episodic sequences of events loosely linked together. Thematically, the text pokes fun at the world of the Chinese literati, which is marked by pretensions and hypocrises. As Lu argues, The Scholars is:

> the first novel in which a writer criticizes social

---

[65] See Hsin-Sheng C. Kao's chapter "Satire in Ching-hua yuan" in Li Ju-chen, p. 78.

[66] Lu Xun, A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1964), pp. 288-9. See also Lai Ming A History of Chinese Literature (London: The Shenval Press, 1964), pp. 327-31; in this book, Lai Ming claims that The Scholars is the first and the best Chinese satirical novel.

[67] Wu Jingzi, The Scholars, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1957).

> abuses without any personal malice, directing his attack mainly on the literati. The style is warm and humorous, gentle and ironical. This must rank as China's first novel of social satire.[68]

The Scholars's departure from personal animosity and its evincement of a larger social concern have greatly influenced the style and tone of subsequent Chinese satiric fiction, one of which is Li's Flowers in the Mirror.

This study will attempt to look at the satirical elements of Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror while taking into consideration the Anglo-American feminist theoretical perspective. As one of the major developments in literary studies in the modern era, feminist criticism, like other literary discourses, is charged with an ideological character.[69] Embarking on a critical analysis of the reading process, feminist criticism is concerned, inter alia, with the possible and probable consequences of women reading literary texts written by men. To the feminist critics, the so-called "great literature" of canonized texts is written predominantly by male authors and displays covert and sometimes overt sexual bias. In terms of literary representation, feminist criticism seeks to expose the "tangle of misconception, distortion, and malicious as well as benevolent prejudices which frequently

---

[68] Lu Xun, p. 288f.

[69] See Maggie Humm, Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986).

govern the depiction of women in literature."[70] Feminist critics observe that female figures such as Eve, Pandora and the malign witch are portrayed as the source of evil and are usually associated with the image of the femme fatale. Furthermore, feminist critics argue that the Muses, the pure and innocent virgins depicted in male texts, reflect certain ideological projections of male desires. As feminist scholarly research into the image of women in literature reveals, the roles allotted to fictional heroines are most frequently either negative or subsidiary. The treatment and fate of fictional heroines reveal that women are usually passive victims of male desire. It is feminist critics who have first drawn attention to how stereotypes such as the subordination, mistreatment, and exclusion of women, are codified in works by male authors. Hence they advise the female reader to re-examine traditional literary works by men in order to challenge the implicit sexist assumptions therein.

In her analysis of the literary representation of women, Mary Ellmann, an American feminist critic, categorizes various stereotypes of femininity presented by male writers as

---

[70] See Susan Koppelman Cornillon, ed., Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives (Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972); Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Margaret R. Higonnet, eds., The Representation of Women in Fiction (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983); Elaine Showalter, ed., The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); and David Holbrook, Images of Woman in Literature (New York: University Press, 1989).

passivity, confinement, piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, formlessness, compliancy and instability.[71] Ellmann argues that these images indirectly contribute to women's internalization of sexual prescription for their behaviour and hence intensify women's sense of inferiority.

Another American feminist critic, Kate Millett, in her book Sexual Politics[72] (1970) also exposes the oppressive representation of female sexuality found in male fiction. By foregrounding the view of a feminist reader, Millett, like Ellmann, highlights the patriarchal ideology prevalent in the works written by authors such as D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet. She points out that by using derogatory stereotypes of women in their works, these male authors promote a kind of male supremacy and indirectly relegate women to a second-class status. Thus, through recognizing and interpreting the image of women in male literature as mysogynistic, Millett offers a way to read against these patriarchal texts by becoming aware of their gender bias.

Ellmann and Millett both argue that the literary text is a "site of negation" of women. Their view laid the seed for the work of Judith Fetterley, whose analysis of traditional American literature marks a crucial point in modern feminist

---

71 Mary Ellmann, Thinking about Women, (New York: Harcourt, 1968), pp. 55-145.

72 Kate Millett, Sexual Politics, (New York: Avon Books, 1970).

criticism. In her studies of fictional works by Hawthorne, Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Henry James, Fetterley advances the notion of "immasculation" which is latent in androcentric texts.[73] She criticizes male literature for being a series of predetermined designs imposed on the female reader because the masculinity inscribed in these texts obscures women's perspective and leads them to adopt a male viewpoint. According to Fetterley, in reading androcentric texts, a woman is "co-opted into participation in a experience from which she is explicitly excluded; she is asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her. She is required to identify against herself."[74] In other words, androcentric texts prevent the woman reader from seeking refuge in her difference; they become the agents of the female reader's self-negation.

Fetterley further describes how the female reading experience becomes one of self-negation. She states that "as readers, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny."[75] Convinced by the fact that the text has the capacity to structure and condition the reader's experience,

---

[73] The Resisting Reader, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

[74] The Resisting Reader, xii.

[75] Ibid., xx.

Fetterley advises female readers to efface the process of "immasculation" by taking a defensive stance, that is, by assuming a detached attitude toward male texts. Fetterley further suggests that female readers should actively combat the sexist designs and intentions inscribed in androcentric texts in order not to be dominated by them. In Fetterley's view, when reading works by male authors, female readers should resist their tendency or inclination to be acquiescent to the male "voice"; rather, they should protect themselves from falling prey to male authors'adversarial schemes.

To a varying degree, the literary perspectives of Ellmann, Millett and Fetterley call to mind the political gender struggle between the male master and the female slave. The discourses of these two adversaries in literary texts basically revolve around the issue of power. Whereas Ellmann and Millett view the text as a transmission of patriarchal ideology, Fetterley emphasizes the need to take control of the reading experience in her advocation of the "resisting" reading mode.

Another point of view is offered by Elizabeth Flynn. In her discussion of the relationship between gender and reading, Flynn points out that reading is in fact a confrontation between the self and the other,[76] resulting in two possible

---

[76] See "Gender and Reading" in Gender and Readings, eds. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986). See also Susan Gabriel ed., "Gender, Text, and Meaning," Papers on Language and Literature 24, 3

consequences. The first result is the domination by the reader, essentially remaining unchanged by and distanced from the text. The second possibility causes the submission of the reader to the text, allowing his or her self to be replaced by the other. Flynn's insight into the reading experience as a battlefield for power is another phrasing of what Ellmann, Millett and Fetterley accentuate in their critical approaches to androcentric texts. Flynn's gender-bound reading is similar to Fetterley's; that is, the latter cautions against the potential detrimental effects of women reading classical texts by male authors and thus urges women to become "resisting readers" of male text so that they will "lose power to hold women prisoners."[77] In short, these feminist critics highlight the importance of altering conventional male-oriented reading habits and devising a reading strategy in harmony with their gender identity.

Through the feminist critics' unmasking of the hidden male agenda in a literary text, they have not only discovered but also created new meanings. They refuse to accept traditional aesthetic standards which are determined by patriarchal values. One feminist critic remarks that the feminist approach is "a way of reading texts that points to the masks of truth with which phallocentricism hides its

---

(Summer 1988), pp. 223-335 for studies of reading and gender theories.

[77] The Resisting Reader, xxiii.

fiction."[78] What feminist critics advocate is the alteration of conventional reading strategies so as to create meaning according to their interests and beliefs. Thus feminist criticism, in its impetus and momentum, exemplifies Stanley Fish's contention that the reader is the source of all possible significance and that the meaning of a text is a function of the interpretive strategies one employs.[79]

Whether the mode of reading a text be "resisting" or "revisionary," feminist critics are concerned with how the text represents women, what it says about gender relations, and how it defines sexual difference. According to Elaine Showalter, the term "gender" is used to mean "the social, cultural and psychological constructs imposed upon biological sexual difference."[80] Gender theory, therefore, is a critical body of theory which "explores the ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system."[81] Moreover, it is a perspective which constructs its meaning from within a particular context and establishes

---

78 Peggy Kamuf, "Writing Like a Woman," in Women and Language in Literature and Society, eds., Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker and Nelly Furman (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 286.

79 Stanley Fish, Is There a Class in the Text?, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), xxix.

80 See Elaine Showalter, "Feminism and Literature," in Literary Theory Today, eds. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-ryan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 196.

81 Ibid., p. 196.

its foundation on a specific constellation of attitudes and points of view.

The issue of power and control is a recurring subject in feminist literary criticism. Most feminist literary critics assume the stance that patriarchal ideology, in whatever version, influences a culture's constructions of gender, thereby affecting the relative allocation of power between men and women. Their primary interest is the "gender subtext"--the covert inscription of gender ideology in a literary work. When approaching androcentric texts, feminist literary critics investigate what conceptions of the world or ideological stance the texts perpetuate. In this respect, the critical examination of rhetorical and aesthetic codes becomes for feminists the pursuit of ideological codes.

In the present study of the satiric elements in Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror, the relationship between gender and genre is significant. Many modern literary critics have utilized genre as an interpretative mechanism. E.D. Hirsch, in Validity in Interpretation, claims that "understanding is itself genre-bound."[82] He argues that the meaning of a text is essentially the one intended by its author and cites genre as one way that meaning is conveyed.

To most feminist literary critics, gender as well as genre is a crucial epistemological category in deciphering a

---

[82] E. D. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 78.

text. Therefore they attempt to offer a comprehensive explanation of textual signification in terms of gender. By looking at the relationship between gender and genre, the distinctive formal and thematic features of a literary work, feminist critics emphasize that a text is a site of ideological struggle, deeply implicated in its own historical moment and cultural climate. Hence they attempt to deconstruct the use of women as signs in patriarchal literary forms, to draw attention to the effect of male gender on structures of signification, and to examine the narrative and stylistic codes of genre.

It is with the premise of feminist criticism and deconstruction theory that I propose to look at the treatment of women and sexuality in both works. Although not as thematically conspicuous as in the Chinese novel, the subject of womanhood and the issue of sexual difference or gender relations are nonetheless significant aspects in Gulliver's Travels. The ensuing chapters of this thesis will examine the extent to which both male authors' literary representation of women is shaped by their chosen literary genre and social conventions. Moreover, it will compare how the Eastern and Western literary traditions are in important ways very similar, despite geographical, social, and cultural differences.

Chapter Three: The Sexual Monstrosity: Women in Gulliver's Travels

The conventions within which Jonathan Swift creates his satiric art are relevant to an understanding of his literary representation of women. Susan Gubar and Felicity Nussbaum, in their studies of English satires on women, observe that woman was a characteristic satiric topos from the Restoration to the mid-eighteenth century.[83] They argue that starting from the tradition of Juvenal's Sixth Satire on women such as the whore, the coquette, the Amazon, and the memento mori, women have gradually emerged as a metaphor for all that is threatening and offensive to the society at large.[84] The social attitude towards women in Swift's time was that women embodied grotesque and monstrous qualities which not only made men powerless, but also contributed to the fall of civilization.[85] Moreover, women were continually associated with the world of chaos and disorder; they were believed to have the capacity to bring about men's moral and spiritual demise. Such conventional attitudes, consequently, created an abundance of literary works in which women are the object of

---

83 Susan Gubar, "The Female Monster in Augustan Satire", Signs, 3, (Winter 1977), pp. 380-94 and Felicity Nussbaum, The Brink of All We Hate, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1984).

84 The Brink of All We Hate, p. 19.

85 Ibid., p. 115.

satiric attack.

Another factor which could affect Swift's literary depiction of women relates to his disappointing relationship with the female sex. Studies of Swift's biography have shown that as a child, Swift had little opportunity to establish significant bonding with women, even his mother, who left Swift to the care of others when he was still an infant.[86] Nor does it seem that Swift was successful in terms of his romantic involvement with the few women whom he encountered in his life. Swift's intellectual and social context shape the disparaging portrayals of women in his literary works, among which his "obscene" poems are best examples. In some of Swift's scatological poems[87] such as "The Furniture of a Woman's Mind" (1727) and "The Journal of a Modern Lady" (1729), the female characters are depicted as either wasting time with ceaseless chattering or repeating meaningless activities daily.[88] The dominant motif in these poems is

---

[86] See Phyllis Greenacre's Swift and Carroll, (New York: International Universities Press, 1955), pp. 15-115 for a detailed discussion and clinical interpretation of Swift's life story.

[87] See David Vieth, "Introduction" to "A Symposium on Women in Swift's Poems: Vanessa, Stella, Lady Acheson, and Celia" PLL, 14 (1978), pp. 115-6. See also Jae Num Lee's Swift and Scatological Satire (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971).

[88] Pat Rogers, ed., Jonathan Swift: Complete Poems, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp. 327-9 and pp. 365-72 respectively.

that women are deprived of a mind which can think sensibly. In other poems like "The Lady's Dressing Room" (1730) and "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" (1734), female sexuality is equated with degeneration, disease, and death.[89] Repeatedly Swift characterizes the female body as evil, dirty, and corrupt in his verse.[90] His erotic and obsessive visions of women suggest, to a certain extent, the ideology dominant in a given historical context.

While Swift's poetry exhibits much sexist prejudice, in Gulliver's Travels, Swift's treatment of women also manifests his unique although biased representation of womanhood. While the male protagonist Gulliver is the central focus and the focalizing element in the story, in the course of his four voyages, the hero encounters certain female characters who play significant roles in the book's narrative structure. This chapter will concentrate on Gulliver's responses, reactions and experiences with various female characters in each of his voyages as well as his relations with his wife and children. Particular attention will be directed to Swift's handling and representation of the female sex in the story and the way it reveals his ambivalent attitude toward women.

Given the pervasive ambiguity of the ironic mode used throughout the work, Swift's depiction of Gulliver's relations

---

89 Ibid., pp. 448-52 and pp. 453-5 respectively.

90 "The Female Monster in Augustan Satire," p.387.

with his family seems to reflect partially, if not completely, Swift's as well as his society's prejudices about women. Upon close analysis, the reader discovers that in the eleven years covered in Gulliver's travel tale, Gulliver spends only a total of seven months and ten days with his wife. Swift, the ironist, also seems to mock Gulliver's indifference to his wife through Gulliver's failure to see that the Laputan wives run away with the servants mainly due to the fact that they are physically and emotionally neglected, not necessarily sheerly because of female caprice. Moreover, in the beginning of Book 4, the reader is told that Gulliver leaves his wife "big with child" (213); and when he finally reaches home, he tells the reader that "[as] soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms, and kissed me, at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell in a swoon for almost an hour" (271). Even right up to the time Gulliver writes the book, he continues to scorn his wife's embraces:

> At the time I am writing it is five years since my last return to England: during the first year I could not endure my wife or children in my presence, the very smell of them was intolerable; much less could I suffer them to eat in the same room. To this hour they dare not presume to touch my bread, or drink out of the same cup; neither was I ever able to let one of them take me by the hand. (271)

While Gulliver's total revulsion from his own wife is consistent with his negative comments on women elsewhere in

the text, and even consistent with Swift's sexist view as exhibited in his excremental poetry, questions remain whether Gulliver's gender bias are identical to Swift's, or they are means through which Swift satirizes Gulliver's limited perspective and prejudice against women.

In Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput, the land of tiny people, his associations with women are marked by subversion and disillusionment. When Gulliver arrives in this fantastic country, its inhabitants treat Gulliver with great awe and respect due to his stupendous size and power. The hero's superior status, however, eventually stops with his refusal to comply with the Lilliputian King's command to subdue their life-long enemy, the Blefuscudians. Towards the end of Gulliver's residency in Lilliput, he is impeached for treason. Among the charges against Gulliver, a crucial one relates to his earlier attempt to extinguish a fire which broke out in the Royal Palace by discharging his urine. The reader is told that Gulliver's benevolent action evokes immense hatred from the Lilliputian Empress:

> And I was privately assured, that the Empress, conceiving the greatest abhorrence of what I had done, removed to the most distant side of the court, firmly resolved that those buildings should never be repaired for her use; and, in the presence of her chief confidants, could not forbear vowing revenge. (69)

Besides this offense against the Empress, another factor

which causes Lilliputians ill feelings towards Gulliver relates to his involvement with the Treasurer's wife, the so-called "Great Lady". Because of the woman's frequent visits and her fondness for Gulliver, the Lilliputians suspect that the "Man Mountain" is secretly engaged in an illicit affair. The petty gossips, thus, contribute to Gulliver's diminished reputation among the tiny people:

> These false information, which I afterwards came to the knowledge of, by an accident not proper to mention, made the Treasurer show his lady for some time an ill countenance, and me a worse; for although he was at last undeceived and reconciled to her, yet I lost all credit with him, and found my interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself, who was indeed too much governed by that favourite.(78)

In this voyage, although social institutions including politics, religion and education are Swift's primary satiric targets, his handling of gender relations reveals his concept of the intrinsic conflict between the social roles of men and women. The two episodes related to Gulliver's contacts with the female sex convey the impression that woman is either the source or facilitator of trouble. Both the Empress and the "Great Lady" are indirect but significant factors which lead to Gulliver's departure from Lilliput, a land where he enjoys superiority. From a psychoanalytical perspective, Swift uses women to represent an underlying hindrance which obstructs male supremacy. That is to say, in the interaction between

men and women, both genders are concurrently struggling for power: whereas the male desires ascendancy, the female covets to subvert the masculine wish-fulfilment.[91]

In contrast to his superior physical stature among the diminutive Lilliputians, in his journey to Brobdingnag, Gulliver perpetually struggles to preserve his dignity against the threats posed by the local animals and human beings who are twelve times his actual size. The fear of being eaten and maltreated by the colossal creatures is a recurrent theme: the reader is told that Gulliver is nearly swallowed by an infant, drowned in a bowl of cream by a dwarf and dropped to death by a malicious monkey. In describing Gulliver's ordeals in this imaginary land, Swift not only conveys a great sense of humour, but also brings forth his satiric outlook on different human groups such as the lower-class farmers, the middle-class merchants and upper-class imperial members. Among the objects under Swift's satiric attack, women or feminine sexuality is a prevalent one governing the entire second voyage. The reader recalls that when Gulliver first lands in Brobdingnag, he is picked up by a giant farmer who later orders his wife to take strict care of the new relatively tiny Gulliver. The farmer's daughter, Glumdalclitch, who realizes that Gulliver is a little doll-man, also claims him for her pleasure. In Gulliver's subsequent adventures in this country, he

---

[91] See Ruth Salvaggio, "Swift and Psychoanalysis, Language and Women," Women's Studies, 15 (1988), pp. 417-34.

encounters other women figures including the Brobdingnagian Queen and the maids of honour in the Royal Court. When examined closely, Gulliver's experience in this voyage is in fact his participation in the world of women, or at least his opportunity to observe it.

Through the microscopic perspective of the various female characters in Brobdingnag, Gulliver communicates both his fascination with and disgust about women's bodies. For instance, while in the farmer's house, Gulliver witnesses what for him is a revolting scene of a wet nurse breast feeding an infant:

> I must confess no object ever disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast, which I cannot tell what to compare with, so as to give the curious reader an idea of its bulk, shape and colour. It stood prominent six foot, and could not be less than sixteen in circumference. The nipple was about half the bigness of my head, and the hue both of that and the dug so varified with spots, pimples and freckles, that nothing could appear more nauseous: for I had a near sight of her, she sitting down the more conveniently to give suck, and I standing on the table. This made me reflect upon the fair skins of our English ladies, who appear so beautiful to us, only because they are of our size and their defects not to be seen but through a magnifying glass, where we find by experiment that the smoothest and whitest skin look rough and coarse, and ill coloured. (99-100)

This image of the grotesque female body is reinforced in another episode in which Gulliver, while visiting the

Brobdingnagian metropolitan, encounters a woman beggar "with a cancer in her breast swelled to a monstrous size, full of holes, in two or three of which [he] could have easily crept, and covered [his] whole body"(117). Under Gulliver's closeness of vision, what is ordinary and normal is seen as loathsome and threatening. Swift's bizarre representation of the female body, therefore, shocks the reader out of familiarity. Most importantly, it is a masculine projection which generates a great sense of revulsion against femininity.

The most telling episode which suggests Swift's ambivalent attitude towards female sexuality is Gulliver's involvement with the Brobdingnagian "Maids of Honour". With abundant detailed description, Swift highlights Gulliver's mortifying experience with these female characters:

> The maids of honour often invited Glumdalclitch to their apartments, and desired she would bring me along with her, on purpose to have the pleasure of seeing and touching me. They would often strip me naked from top to toe, and lay me at full length in their bosoms; wherewith I was much disgusted; because, to say the truth, a very offensive smell came from their skins.
>
> That which give me most uneasiness among these maids of honour, when my nurse carried me to visit them, was to see them use me without any manner of ceremony, like a creature who had no sort of consequence. For they would strip themselves to the skin, and put on their smocks in my presence, while I was placed on their toilet directly before their naked bodies, which, I am sure, to me was very far from being a tempting sight, or from giving me any other emotions than

> those of horror and disgust. Their skins appeared so coarse and uneven, so variously coloured, when I saw them near, with a mole here and there as broad as a trencher, and hairs hanging from it thicker than pack-threads, to say nothing further concerning the rest of their persons.... The handsomest among these maids of honour, a pleasant frolicsome girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride upon one of her nipples, with many other tricks, wherein the reader will excuse me for not being over particular. But I was so much displeased, that I entreated Glumdalclitch to contrive some excuse for not seeing that young lady any more. (122-3)

As in the previous descriptions in this voyage, Gulliver's perspective of the female body is charged with negativity and imperfection. In this episode, Gulliver is forced to confront feminine sexuality directly. Under the manipulation and exploitation of the Maids of Honour, Gulliver's sexual pride is much offended. In the face of the gigantic women, Gulliver's minuteness does not allow him to exercise any authority or control over his body; he has no choice but to submit to their playful desire.

Swift's satiric outlook on gender relation, or more specifically, masculine and feminine sexuality is well reflected in this voyage. Throughout Gulliver's adventures in Brobdingnag, his predicament is that, while women constantly make him an object of desire (Glumdalclitch's doll, the Queen's pet, the Maids of Honour's toy), he is both powerless and helpless to assert his dignity, or more appropriately, his male ego. This subversion of the conventional trope--woman as

a trope of oppression and man as oppressiveness--to a certain extent reveals Swift's fantasy about feminine sexuality; it suggests Swift's anxiety about the overpowering or threatening sphere of feminine desire which makes men impotent and insignificant.

In Gulliver's third voyage, his involvement with women is relatively less intimate than his interaction with the female sex in Lilliput and Brobdingnag. Throughout his adventure in Laputa, the Flying Island, Gulliver essentially remains an observer who reports the specific geographical features and cultural characteristics of this fantastic place. Different from his previous adventures, Gulliver's physical stature is similar to that of the inhabitants in Laputa; hence, he neither provides the reader a microscopic nor a macroscopic view of the local women. Assuming the role of an objective witness, Gulliver reports:

> The women of the island have abundance of vivacity; they contemn their husbands, and are exceedingly fond of strangers, whereof there is always a considerable number from the continent below, attending at court, either upon affairs of the several towns and corporations, or their own particular occasions, but are much despised, because they want the same endowments. Among these the ladies choose their gallants: but the vexation is, that they act with too much ease and security, for the husband is always so rapt in speculation, that the mistress and lover may proceed to the greatest familiarities before his face, if he be but provided with paper and implements, and without his flapper at his side.(163)

Because of their husbands' preoccupation with intellectual speculation, Gulliver observes that the wives in Laputa always feel neglected and hence constantly "lament their confinement to the island"(163). To give the reader a better understanding of the "escape" mentality ingrained in the Laputan women, Gulliver recounts a striking tale of a prime minister's wife who, despite all the riches and blessings provided by her status, elopes with "an old deformed footman who [beats] her every day, and in whose company she [is] taken much against her will"(163). Yet although the woman is received by the Laputans with "all possible kindness, and without the least reproach, she soon after [contrives] to steal down again with all her jewels, to the same gallant"(163). With regard to the woman's behaviour, Gulliver comments:

> This may perhaps pass with the reader rather than an European or English story, than for one of a country so remote. But he may please to consider, that the caprices of womankind are not limited by any climate or nation, and that they are much more uniform than can be easily imagined.(164)

Gulliver's sarcastic remarks convey the impression that there exists an intrinsic perversion within female nature which transcends national and cultural boundaries. In his account of his adventures in Laputa, Gulliver carries on his habits of finding faults with the female sex, although the

monstrosity of women's bodies is not the centre of attack. Here, Swift's criticism of the Laputan women focuses on their immoral nature, including their infidelity and fickleness. Worthy of note, Swift's depiction of the husbands is not flattering either: he satirizes the men who are so engrossed in scientific speculations that they overlook their wives' resentment. Yet, it is interesting to note that by naming the island "Laputa", which in Spanish is cognate with the term "whore,"[92] Swift conjures up an atmosphere of licentiousness which dominates the reader's comprehension of the Laputan women. As Nussbaum argues, the satiric myth in seventeenth-century England defines women by their very nature as whores.[93] She also points out that Medieval misogynist clichés described women as "lascivious, adulterous, faithless, malevolent and vain" and this kind of attitude can be found in works such as John Oldham's "A Satyr Upon a Woman" (1678), the anonymous Misogynus (1682) and The Great Birth of Man (1686), and Robert Gould's Love Given O're(1682).[94] Thus, carrying on with the misogynist tradition at his time, Swift offers the reader an entirely negative view on women.

---

92 See Jenny Mezciems, "The Unity of Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa': Structure as Meaning in Utopian Fiction" Modern Language Review, 72, (1977), p. 6 for different interpretations of the implications of this name.

93 The Brink of All We Hate, p. 20.

94 Ibid., p. 20.

Another aspect of Swift's representation of the female sex in Gulliver's adventure in Laputa is the motif of women as disruption or disturbance of male systems. To the men on the Flying Island, women symbolize a pervasive force which intrudes on their pursuit of "truth."[95] As Gulliver comments, the Laputan women "long to see the world, and take the diversions of the metropolis" (163). Although Swift's satire in this episode centres on the goals and ambitions of the Laputan men, the inevitable hidden message is that the Laputan women represent a certain digressive vigour and pressure which hinder men from achieving their goals. Under Swift's manipulation of details, the women in Laputa represent the female sex as primarily vain, sensual, and intellectually vulnerable. Worst of all, they are uncontrollable objects which create chaos and disorder in the world of men.

Swift's treatment of women in Gulliver's last voyage is again marked with profound masculine prejudice. After landing in the country of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver encounters two types of inhabitants: the half-human ape-like creatures called Yahoos and a group of peaceful, rational horses who are the masters of the country. With regard to the female sex in this imaginary voyage, Gulliver recounts that:

---

[95] See Salvaggio p. 428 and Susan Bruce, "The Flying Island and Female Anatomy: Gynaecology and Power in Gulliver's Travels," Genders, 1-3, (1988), pp. 59-76.

> a female Yahoo would often stand behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males passing by, and then appear, and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces, at which time it was observed, that she had a most offensive smell; and when any of the males advanced, would slowly retire, looking often back, and with a counterfeit show of fear, run off into some convenient place where she knew the male would follow her. (249)

Here, similar to his disgust with the "very offensive smell" of the Maids of Honour in Brobdingnag, Gulliver also finds the body odour of the female Yahoos repulsive. The recurrent commentary on the abhorrent body odour of women reveals Swift's obsession with and repudiation of the female body. Jane Gallop, in her studies of the intricate relationship between feminism and psychanalysis, points out that "smell" is of crucial significance to men's psychological make-up.[96] She further argues that "because female body odour threatens to undo the achievements of repression and sublimation, threatens to return the subject to the powerlessness, intensity and anxiety of an immediate, unmediated connection with the body of the mother,"[97] men perceive it as a disturbing force which denies their aggressive desires. One

---

[96] Jane Gallop, The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis (Itaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). Cf. Ruth Salvaggio "Swift and Psychoanalysis, Language and Women" Women's Studies, 15, (1988), p. 427.

[97] Ibid., p. 27.

recalls that in Swift's scatological poems, he is particularly outspoken concerning the filthiness of the female body. In this regard Swift's adverse view of the female body might suggest his unconscious desire to triumph over the feminine threats which continue to negate his masculinity.

In the course of Gulliver's residency in Houyhnhnms-land, he records a further incident which underlines his negative experience with the female sex:

> Being one day abroad with my protector the sorrel nag, and the weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a river that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the stream. It happened that a young female Yahoo, standing behind a bank, saw the whole proceeding, and inflamed by desire, as the nag and I conjectured, came running with all speed, and leaped into the water within five yards of the place where I bathed. I was never in my life so terribly frightened; the nag was grazing at some distance, not suspecting any harm. She embraced me after a most fulsome manner; I roared as loud as I could, and the nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her grasp, with the utmost reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite bank, where she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my clothes. (251-2)

In this episode, Gulliver's powerlessness contrasts sharply with the female Yahoo's animalistic brutality. Overwhelmed by the woman's flaming passion, he is almost victimized by her sexual advance. To the self-righteous Gulliver, the perverse

nature of the female Yahoo only reinforces his earlier observation of womanhood:

> I could not reflect without some amazement, and much sorrow, that the rudiments of lewdness, coquetry, censure, and scandal, should have place by instinct in womankind. (249)

Whereas Gulliver remains a distant eyewitness in Laputa, his direct contact with the female sex in this fantastic land reinforces his belief that women are naturally depraved and morally corrupted. Although Gulliver describes both male and female Yahoos as vile beings, his attack seems to be centred on the female Yahoos. In Gulliver's accounts of his interaction with the female Yahoos, he evokes the feeling that they are creatures who embody an unredeemable quality.

One interesting aspect of Swift's beliefs regarding the attributes of masculinity and femininity is the symbolic significance of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos. Indeed, it may be argued that Swift uses both kinds of creatures to reveal the polar opposites inherent in men and women. As a symbol of masculinity, the horses are portrayed as rational beings to whom dispute is incomprehensible. Since they have no word in their language to express anything that is evil, they do not lie, nor do they have wicked thoughts against each other. Moreover, guided by pure reason, the Houyhnhnms value order and harmony in their community. On the other hand, the Yahoos

are savage creatures whose existence is marked by self-pampering. The reader is told that they wallow in filth and greedily devour raw meat. Uncontrolled by reason, the Yahoos constantly seek to gratify their bodily senses, even at the expense of bloody quarrels. Their unlicensed craving is in complete contrast to the Houyhnhnms, who are in full control of their passions. Although it is true that the Houyhnhums, representing pure rationality and reasoning, are an important aspect of Swift's satire on humanity, in the depiction of the character traits of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos, Swift seems to focus on the essential discrepancy between masculinity and femininity; and conveys the message that just because men are naturally rational and reasonable, they are the legitimate masters of the irrational and passionate women.

From a literary perspective, Swift's representation of women in Gulliver's Travels reflects his adherence to a rhetorical convention which undermines femininity. What Swift criticizes or attacks about the female sex in the text may very well be a reaffirmation of the social attitudes towards women in his time. His portrayals of the female characters as repulsive and vulgar manifest to a certain degree his concepts about the nature of the female sex. While one could argue that Swift's textual harassment of women might simply be a minor aspect or a means through which Swift conveys his complete pessimism about society and human nature, in view of the total impression (both meaning and message) generated in

the text, and also by reference to his known personal opinions and biographical experience,[98] it is difficult to discredit or disqualify Swift's misogyny.

It is also possible that Swift uses the Menippean form to convey his satiric outlook on gender identity. In Gulliver's voyages to Brobdingnag and land of the Houyhnhnms, Swift highlights the female characters' odious and filthy bodies, thereby destroying the romantic image of women as the perfect form. Moreover, in almost all journeys that Gulliver undertakes, the narrator Gulliver directs the reader's attention to the immorality or spiritual corruption embodied in the women whom he encounters. Repeatedly, the text questions the ideological belief that women are the exemplification of angelic purity. It challenges the romantic stereotypical idea that women are faultless and devoid of blemishes. In a sense, Swift is concerned with men's illusion or misconception of female paragons. By ridiculing the imperfections of the female sex, Swift underlines women's potentiality or ability to disrupt men's expectations.

Swift's satirical interpretation of womanhood can also be viewed from a psychological perspective. In his emphasis of the monstrous and frightening aspects of women's physicality, as well as their spiritual depravity, Swift perpetually subjugates the female sex to an inferior and degenerate state.

---

[98] See Phyllis Greenacre's book, especially Part 1.

As Nussbaum argues, women in seventeenth-century satires come to embody the very absence of patriarchal order and hierarchy that men most fear.[99] Therefore Swift's attacks on the female sex, to a certain extent, betray his male anxiety over female control and power. By attacking the thing that he fears most, Swift not only expresses his unease or apprehension about female power, but also reinforces his masculine ideology. Just as the women in Flowers in the Mirror, in Gulliver's Travels, women symbolize a world of disorder: they continue to negate Gulliver's desire for systematic stratagems; moreover, they represent a disruptive force which poses threats to male dominance.

In sum, Swift's handling of the subject of womanhood reveals his concept of female sexuality and gender relations. It also attests to the intricate relations between personal aesthetics, rhetorical conventions and the dominant cultural ideology to which Swift subscribes.

---

[99] The Brink of All We Hate, p. 19.

Chapter Four: Liberal Confucianism and Gender Conflicts in Flowers in the Mirror

In the previous chapter, I have explored the ways in which Jonathan Swift's text encodes and disseminates his cultural value system in a given historic period, and now, shifting to the Chinese text, I will examine the extent to which Li Ruzhen's representation and handling of the female sex reveals his unique understanding of the roles, aspirations, potentials and needs of the women of his society. Like Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Li's Flowers in the Mirror is a social satire marked with a playful tone. As an isolated scholar whose merits were not recognized by the Chinese government, Li was deeply concerned with certain mental attitudes and philosophical postures governing Chinese culture in his time. By adopting the travelogue form, Li is able to expose the hypocrisy, inconsistency and absurdity of certain human actions through fictional settings.

Following the example of Wu Jingzi's The Scholars,[100] Flowers in the Mirror is distinguished by its satiric import. In terms of style and tone, the book is episodic and remarkably playful. Wit and humour are generated through the various episodes relating to the strangeness of the distant lands to which the central characters travel. For example, in the depiction of Tang Ao and his companions' visit to the

---

[100] Cf. Notes 66-7.

Gentlemen's Kingdom (Chapter XI), Li highlights the admirable qualities of the inhabitants: merchants try to sell their wares for as low a price as possible while their customers insist on paying more. In the No-Intestine Kingdom the wealthy feed their slaves with their own excrement (Chapter XIV). In the Kingdom of Winged Men, people love flattery so much that their heads have swelled to be the same size as their bodies (Chapter XXVII). Great Men's Country is a land of high moral standards because each citizen has under his feet a cloud which changes colour according to his intention (Chapter XIV). The Country of the Pig Snout is a place inhabited by people who have been habitual liars in their former existence; for punishment each of them has a protruding snout like that of a pig (Chapter XXVII). Furthermore, the Country of Perforated Chest is a land full of incorrigible evildoers who are born with a hole in the chest because their hearts have long since rotted away (Chapter XXVI).

The subject matter under Li's satiric manipulation is indeed diverse and complicated, reflecting his sensitivity and perceptiveness as to the ills and faults in Chinese society. Interestingly, while expressing his opinions about various Chinese social customs and institutions, Li draws attention to an issue which has been much neglected in Chinese literature, namely, the treatment of women in Chinese society. As in Gulliver's Travels, there are various episodes which involve the female sex. Differing from Swift's predominantly

misogynist prejudices, Li, while portraying the negative traits in female characters, also highlights their positive characteristics. In the ensuing section of this chapter, I will attempt to analyze how Li's satiric art reveals his belief that the conflicts in gender relations are inherent in traditional Chinese society.

In the Chinese text, even the title suggests Li's understanding of women's identity as reflections in a mirror and his belief in the potential conflicts inherent in the gender relations of traditional Chinese society. On the literary plane, flowers refer to the one hundred flower spirits whose visits to the mundane world constitute the core of the book's narrative structure. From another perspective flowers symbolize beauty, something which most people adore. In addition, they are able to transmit delightful fragrance which is a charm to humanity. However, it is also true that most flowers are short-lived and difficult to preserve. By using flowers to symbolize women, Li conveys his insight that women are the embodiment of transitory beauty and momentary glory.

In Flowers in the Mirror, Li also uses the mirror image to reinforce the motif of women as transitory beauty. Metaphorically speaking, the mirror is an instrument of illusion but can also be a reflection, and the things contained in it are not real. In the same light, the flower spirits in the narrative are not human flesh; they are only

fairies or spirits who are destined to go through the ordeals of the mundane world. Despite their beauty, talents and intelligence, the flower spirits only live a temporary existence in the earthly realm. Eventually they are all summoned back to heaven, the place from which they have descended. Li, however, sustains the illusion--all representations being illusion--of the female flower spirits who are being carefully observed throughout the text.

Another important aspect suggesting Li's attitude toward feminine virtues is found in the Prologue:

> In former times, Ban Zhao in her Nu Jie (Admonitions for Women) said: "Women have four behavioral characteristics: 1) Feminine virtue, 2) feminine speech, 3) feminine bearing, and 4) feminine tasks." These four are the principal goals for women and are indispensable. Now in beginning this work, why do I take Ban Zhao's Nu Jie as an introduction? It is because what this book contains, though but trivial matters of the women's quarters and casual affections between men and women, certainly resembles what Ban Zhao called the "four behavioral characteristics." Clearly there have been women who have not only had the finest natural dispositions but have been pure in mind as well. How could they have come to this unless daily they had reverently followed the Nu Jie and respectfully adhered to wise instructions?... [In Li's novel], women are shown to be women and wives to be wives. That which is constant is made to be constant; that which changes, made to change. Although what is narrated approaches the frivolous, yet in summation the work returns to what is proper. (Chapter I)

By citing Ban Zhao's teachings on feminine conduct,[101] Li brings forth his Confucian outlook, according to which women are expected to observe certain rules of conduct for everyday life. They are asked to devote themselves to the cultivation, preservation, and exercise of womanly qualities, notably humility, resignation, subservience, self-abasement, and self-abnegation. As humility is seen as the foremost feminine virtue, women are to be trained to demonstrate unconditional obedience to the patriarchal order.

As the reader proceeds to the frame story, Li's placing of the plot into distant historical times and his use of mythological terms merits attention. It is possible that Li incorporates the fantastic elements in the text to appeal to the public, who, after Pu Songling's (1640-1715) Liaozhai Zhiyi (Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio, 1766),[102] had developed an interest for such literature. One could also postulate that Li uses such mystical settings to protect himself from potential political censorship or the accusation of attacking the Manchu government's poor management of

---

101 Ban Zhao (d. A.D. 116), also known as Cao Dagu, is the best known female scholar in ancient China. Her Nu Jie, a book on the theoretical elucidation of feminine virtues, was regarded as a bible for the edification of women in traditional Chinese society. For the biography of Ban Zhao and the English translation of Nu Jie, see Nancy Lee Swann, Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China, (New York: Century, 1932).

102 See Herbert A. Giles, trans. Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio (New York: Dover Publication), 1969.

Chinese society.

Within the structural design of the whole work, it is significant to note that Li introduces a crucial idea related to the overall theme of the book through the frame story: that is, for the flower spirits to be reincarnated as mortal women who have to withstand the particular hardships of the female lot in China is a divine punishment in itself; and it is only through undergoing trials and tribulations that the fairies can regain their heavenly status, that is, salvation.

Among the episodes depicting the travellers' visits to strange lands, there are several which demonstrate Li's manipulation of women as symbol or ideas to express his satiric outlook on contemporary Chinese society. The first example is the adventure of Tang Ao and his companions in the Country of Black-teeth where the inhabitants are characterized by black teeth and black skin (Chapter XVIII). There the travellers encounter two fifteen-year-old native girls who, contrary to their expectations, are remarkably well learned and cultured. In discussing various subjects such as obscure problems in historical phonology and different interpretations of the classical texts with the girls, Tang Ao and Old Duo are repeatedly outwitted by both girls' extensive knowledge. But it is Old Duo who is especially embarrassed during the confrontation, although he is the most highly regarded Confucian scholar in the group. The narrative recounts that upon the girls' forceful questioning and intellectual

advances, Old Duo is thoroughly abashed, "His face turns bright red, sweat pours from his head, and he becomes utterly speechless."[103] Through the comic depiction of Old Duo's humiliating experience, Li criticizes the Chinese literati (who are predominately male) whose pretentiousness blinds them from realizing that intelligence and knowledge are not necessarily bound by race, age, class and gender. Although the two girls in this bizarre land are homely in appearance, their erudition and acumen are merits which far exceed their physiological imperfection. In a sense, the two girls become the means through which Li launches his satiric attack on the perception of intellectual superiority ingrained in the Chinese mentality.

Another episode which suggests Li's critical view of the treatment of women in traditional Chinese society relates to the travellers' adventure in the Country of Women (Chapters XXXII- XXXVII). The narrative recounts that the social roles of men and women are totally reversed in this imaginary land. Whereas the men dress in blouse and skirts, wear make-up and take charge of domestic chores, the women wear boots, trousers, and manage affairs outside the household. Marvelling at the reversal of sexual norms, Tang Ao and Old

---

[103] Translation mine. See Jinghuayuan, ed. Zhiyan chuban she (Taipei, 1992), p. 113. In the thesis, there are three kinds of translation: the abridged version from Lin Tai-yi's Flowers in the Mirror, the quotations from other literary critics, and my own. Translations from the Flowers in the Mirror are with page numbers in brackets, unless otherwise indicated.

Duo fix their gaze on a bearded "woman" who is greatly annoyed by their conduct. "She" cries out:

> there are beards on your faces, you must be two women. How dare you run about in gentlemen's dress! You pretend to be peeping at women, but in reality you are looking for men. Why don't you look into a mirror and remind yourselves of your sex? O you women of no sense of shame.[104]

Here, Li's satiric object is ambiguous. While one may say that the accusation of the travellers' misconduct as transvestites is a satiric attack on the Chinese women who fail to observe the traditional Chinese prescription of feminine modesty and propriety, another interpretation of this episode is that Li is criticizing the typecasting of women in his society.

It is in this extraordinary place, the Country of Women, where Lin Zhiyang, Tang Ao's brother-in-law, is chosen to be the "queen" of the country's king, who is actually a woman. The reader is told that Lin is forced to take a perfumed bath, then dress in skirts, and pierce his ears. Lin's suffering and tribulations reach a climax when he is ordered to have his feet bound. In a comical light, the narrative highlights the physical pain as well as the mental anguish that Lin undergoes:

> Two other maids seized Lin's feet as the black-

---

[104] Quoted by Nancy J. F. Evans, "Social Criticism in the Ching: The Novel of Ching hua-yuan," Papers on China, 23 (1970), p. 55.

> bearded one sat down on a low stool, and began to rip the silk into ribbons. Seizing Lin's right foot, he set it upon his knee, and sprinkled white alum powder between the toes and the grooves of the foot. He squeezed the toes tightly together, bent them down so that the whole foot was shaped like an arch, and took a length of white silk and bound it tightly around it twice. One of the others sewed the ribbon together in small stitches. Again the silk went around the foot, and again, it was sewed up.
> Merchant Lin felt as though his feet were burning, and wave after wave of pain rose to his heart. When he could stand it no longer, he let out his voice and began to cry. The 'maids' had hastily made a pair of soft-soled red shoes, and these they put on both his feet. (110-1)

After Lin's eventual escape from the female king's captivity, he recounts his experience to his wife:

> I was beaten and hung upside down in the tower and had my ears drilled through. All these tortures, however, were comparatively easy to stand. What I absolutely could not stand was to have my two big feet bound until the bones were cracked and the tendons torn, leaving nothing except a bony skeleton covered by a thin skin. And when I moved about in the day or at night, my toes smarted until I was ready to die with pain. Just think that I have escaped from such a humiliation, which I am afraid even among the ancient people very few persons could stand.[105]

The vivid depiction of the travellers' adventure in this foreign land clearly reveals Li's wit and humour. By placing the male characters in a female-dominated world, Li undermines the Confucian supposition of male privilege. In this

---

[105] Quoted by Lin Yutang, "Feminist Thought in Ancient China," Tien Hsia Monthly, 1, 2 (September 1935), p. 149.

fantastic realm, men are bodily constrained by "feminine" adornments, physically confined at home and socially prohibited from political participation. On the contrary, the women assume the vital responsibility of managing social and political activities. In Li's playful vision, all the male characters, including the male inhabitants and the travellers, appear insignificant. They are all subjects under the control of the female king. Thus, Li's reversal of normal roles between men and women in the story provides him with an avenue to challenge the traditional hegemonic relations between the sexes in China.

With regard to the foot-binding episode, by putting a man through a typical female experience and thereby satirizing the Chinese traditional custom of deforming the feet of "privileged" women, Li reveals his humanistic gesture, especially his sympathy towards traditional Chinese women who all have to undergo such a painful experience.

The third episode which reveals Li's use of the female sex to symbolize his philosophical posture is the story of the bandit's wife in the Country of the Double-faced (Chapters L-LI). In this grotesque land, the inhabitants all have two faces--a kind and benign one on the front to show it to the rich and powerful, and a hideous one on the back covered by a head scarf to turn to the poor and helpless. It happens that during their visit there, Tang Ao and his companions are robbed by a local bandit who decides to keep three girls from

Tang Ao's company as his concubines. Enraged by her husband's licentiousness, the bandit's wife orders her servants to beat her husband up until his hips are burst and bleeding. In a comical manner, the narrative reports:

> "Twenty more!" the woman cried. "This heartless bandit is not going to get off so easily!"
> The bandit chief sobbed, "Please, Madam! I cannot endure any more." (174)

At that time, the bandit's wife utters a retort condemning her husband's ingratitude:

> Would you like it if I took a gigolo, and cast you aside? In times of poverty, you men sometimes know what is right and what is wrong. But when you get rich, you forget not only your old friends and relatives, but even the wife who struggled with you in your hard days! And with your nose up in the air, you think only of yourselves! For that alone you ought to be cut up into ten thousand pieces, and you are still thinking of taking concubines! I am beating you for no other reason than that you are selfish, and never think of other people. I am going to beat you until you have not a shred of pride left, and show some humility! After today, I will not interfere with you any more. If you don't want to take concubines, all right. If you do, all right too. But find me a gigolo first. (175)

As in the description of the travellers' adventure in the Country of Women, Li uses the device of sexual norm subversion in this episode for satiric purpose. He pokes fun at the existing social norms which govern the gender and marital relations in traditional Chinese society. One recalls from Ban Zhao's teaching that within the marital context in traditional Chinese society, chastity and fidelity are given as the operative concepts in a wife's relationship to her

husband. Even when the husband dies, the wife has no right to remarry. The result is that women had no choice but to submit to the "double standard" under which polygamy applies to men exclusively. From one perspective, it may be argued that Li is sympathetic to women's oppressed position and he is against the one-sided chastity enforced on women. By naming this foreign land the "Country of the Double-faced," Li reinforces his message of the hypocrisy or sexual inequality exemplified in the masculine practice of taking concubines.

In this episode, through the comic portrayals of the hen-pecked husband and the tenacious, outspoken wife, Li brings home his message that selfishness is an inherent human deficiency. The core of the bandit's wife's accusation is: "you think only of [yourself]" (175). Li implies that strife and disharmony occur because human beings are selfish, and that they all desire to assert their will power.

Besides using these three episodes to convey his critical perspective of the traditional treatment of women in China, Li uses the twelve decrees issued by Empress Wu[106] on her seventieth birthday to reveal his concern regarding the welfare of Chinese women in his time. The main points of Empress Wu's program include: females who perform distinguished services at home to their parents or parents-in-law would be publicly honoured (Decree 1). Friendship between

---

106 Cf. note 5.

sisters-in-law would be respected (Decree 2). Widows who remain chaste and filial all their lives would be recognized (Decree 3). An honourary plaque of longevity would be given to those women who reach seventy and whose moral conduct are impeccable (Decree 4). Palace maids in the imperial harems would be dismissed after five years of service and would be allowed to marry (Decree 5). The state would establish old-age homes for all the unattached women over forty years old (Decree 6). The state would set up homes to care for aged and infirm women and build orphanages to take care of poor female infants (Decree 7). A monthly allowance would be given to widows (Decree 8). The Empress would provide dowries for those girls over twenty who lack money to get married (Decree 9). The state would set up women's clinics throughout the country and appoint women physicians to take care of female patients (Decree 10). Women from impoverished families would be buried at government expense (Decree 11). The state would erect honorific inscriptions or memorial temples for virtuous and filial women after their deaths (Decree 12).

In addition to the decrees, Empress Wu institutes a new system of state examinations for women, including the awarding of degrees and titles to successful candidates. Here is a synopsis of her declaration:

> ...Heaven is not discriminating in endowing human beings with the pure essences and fine savours of the Universe. Although men may be as brilliant as jade, women are no less so. In my search for people to help me with affairs of the nation, a ministry

> is given to fine men of learning and ability. But so far the source of talented women has not been explored. Although talented men have been recommended to me, and there are none too many of these, no talented woman has been singled out. Now since the pure essences and fine savours of the Universe have been concentrated upon a woman (myself) for so long, it follows that the glory and talent of women should be promulgated and propagated.
>
> After consultations with my officials, I have decided to hold Imperial Examinations for Women. (135)

In view of the various episodes which satirize the unjust treatment of women in traditional Chinese society, together with Empress Wu's institutioning of a series of social programs to improve the lots of women, one might argue that Li is sympathetic to women's inferior social status and is promoting a utopian state of sexual equality. Hu Shi, the well-known Chinese literary critic in the early 1920s, praises Flowers in the Mirror as a "Chinese Declaration of Rights of Women."[107] He claims that the central theme of the book is equal treatment, equal education and equal opportunity for civil advancement and political participation between women and men.[108] Another literary critic, Lin Yutang, in his examination of feminist thought in ancient China, supports Hu's view that the book is a pioneer work which advocates

---

107 Hu Shi, "A Chinese Declaration of the Rights of Women," The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, 8, 2, (1924), pp. 100-9.

108 Ibid., p. 108.

gender equality.[109] Corresponding to these Chinese literary critics' insights, the Western literary critic Frederick P. Brandauer also suggests that "much of the work promotes a freeing of women from conditions that hinder the realization of their true potential and that limit their opportunity for self-fulfilment."[110] Using the prologue to support his points, Brandauer further argues that the emancipation of women that the book promotes is actually "conceived with a traditional Chinese context very clearly defined by an early Confucian ideal of womanhood."[111] Furthermore, Paul S. Ropp, in his examination of the roots of feminist thoughts in Qing period, also affirms that the women in the text are given positions of greater dignity and equality with men when compared to the rigid stereotypes of the old morality in previous Chinese literature.[112]

It is true that the satiric elements and sarcastic tone in the book convey the feeling that Li is antagonistic towards many social customs and institutions of his time, especially those which place women in a disadvantaged state. Yet upon a

---

109 See Yutang Lin, "Feminist Thought in Ancient China," Tien Hsia Monthly, 1, 2 (Sept. 1935), pp. 127-50.

110 Frederick P. Brandauer, "Women in the Ching-hua yuan: Emancipation towards a Confucian Ideal," Journal of Asian Studies, 36, 4, (August 1977), pp. 647-60.

111 Ibid., p. 650.

112 Paul S. Ropp, "The Seeds of Change: Reflections on the Condition of Women in the Early and Mid Ch'ing," Signs, 2, 1 (1976), p. 12.

close analysis of the narrative, it is evident that Li's criticism or disapproval of the prejudiced treatment of the female sex in traditional Chinese society is limited in scope and sometimes inconsistent. For instance, in the episode which occurs in the Country of Black-teeth, Li, while subverting the traditional belief that women are intellectually inferior to men, implicitly cautions the males to be aware of women's potentiality and power of critical thinking through Old Duo's humiliation.

Similarly, in the Country of Women, although Li's point seems to be the abuse of power in both genders, Li conveys the impression of the undesirability of absolute power, especially that of female's. Assuming absolute authority over men, the female king is able to mortify and deny male dignity. This exploitation of the male by female power may throw into question Li's advocacy of female emancipation from masculine supremacy.

Even in the episode concerning the bandit's wife, she appears as a terrorizing figure, a virago who refuses to submit to the hierarchical social structure. Under Li's portrayal, instead of winning the reader's sympathy, the bandit's wife's cruelty and tyrannizing behaviour becomes the focus of attention. In fact, there are different ways to interpret this episode. First, it suggests that Li sees the potential of abuse of power in both genders. As with the female king in the Country of Women, Li uses the example of

the bandit's wife to imply that if women were given power, they would inevitably abuse men. The result would be that men would be deprived of dignity and social harmony would be at stake. Secondly, in order to avoid being accused of propagating overt feminism, given the fact that Chinese society in Li's time was still conservative about feminist thought, Li cannot refrain from adding a negative note on the issue of female power.

It is also worth noting that while in the earlier part of the text Li insinuates that footbinding is an inhuman social custom inducing immense pain for women, in a later section, one of the flower spirits named Yin Ruohua who escapes from her captivity in a foreign country is required to bind her feet immediately upon her arrival in China (Chapter XLVI). To the travellers, including the merchant Lin who suffered tremendous affliction when his feet were bound in the Country of Women, footbinding seems to be a prerequisite, a rite necessary in order that Yin be recognized as a Chinese woman; there is not the slightest objection against Yin taking this "step." In a sense, the fate of Yin reflects either Li's or, may we say, the average Chinese's inability to be completely free from the dominant Confucian code of ethics which denies women physical as well as social mobility.

Li's attitude toward women's roles in marital relations is equally ambivalent. One recalls that in the Double-faced Country Li highlights the drawbacks of enforced chastity on

women; nevertheless, towards the end of the work, Li's treatment of some of the female characters betrays a conflicting point of view. During the final campaign against Empress Wu, some of the young male soldiers whom the flower spirits married or betrothed are killed on the battlefield. Once these young women hear the news, they all commit suicide in order to maintain a "spotless name" and "preserve their integrity" (Chapter XCVIII). The decisive behaviour of these female characters in the name of chastity suggests Li's deep-rooted masculine outlook. By allowing the young women to destroy themselves, Li is indeed cherishing a system of moral codes which leaves little room for the women to direct their destinies.

Li's belief in the cult of female chastity is also clearly revealed in Empress Wu's social reform programs. When examined closely, of the twelve decrees intended to improve the welfare of women, Decrees 1, 3, 4, and 12 all reinforce the view that women's chastity and fidelity towards men are paramount virtues of the female sex. Here, although it is difficult to be certain of Li's motivation--whether he is unable or, unwilling, to transcend the double standard which governs the lives of women in traditional Chinese society--the general impression is that Li's advocacy of the betterment of Chinese women is very limited in scope. Questions arise as to whether Li is offering advanced insights into women's plights, or in fact perpetuating the hegemony of patriarchy.

Another aspect reflecting Li's ambiguous attitude toward gender equality is the examination system for women. True, by allowing women to enter the examination system, Li proposes that women should be given equal opportunity to explore their potential and to serve in government positions just as men do. However, the eventual official appointment of the successful graduates, the one hundred flower spirits, reveals Li's hesitation in giving women too much political power. With the exception of the flower spirit Yin Ruohua, who is assigned to succeed the throne of the Country of Women, and her three companions, who become Yin's ministers (Chapter XCIV), none of the one hundred flower spirits is given responsible political office: they are all chosen to minister "inside the palace"[113] where involvement in national affairs is minimal. Thus it is questionable whether Li's allocation of space for women presents a completely revolutionary vision of social and gender equality.

Equally indeterminate in regard to Li's concept of womanhood and promotion of gender equality is his satiric treatment of Empress Wu. In the novel, Empress Wu assumes a central role around which most of the crucial actions revolve. It is she who precipitates the banishments of the flower spirits from the heavenly realm. It is also she who triggers

---

[113] This point is addressed by Brandauer on p. 658 where he argues that Li's ideology of womanhood is inseparable from Confucian doctrines. See also Nancy Evans, note 104.

Tang Ao's political frustrations and contributes to his desire to travel. Moreover, it is only through the imperial examination instituted by Empress Wu that the one hundred dispersed flower spirits are able to reunite. Finally, she is the target whom the Tang revolutionaries try to overthrow at the end of the tale.

Throughout the narrative, Empress Wu is depicted as a mysterious figure who embodies mostly negative qualities. When she first appears, she symbolizes merely depravity:

> The Emperors Tang Tai-tsu and Tang Tai-tsung were originally ministers in the Sui dynasty (589-617 A.D.) who usurped the throne of Emperor Yang, and established the Tang dynasty (618-905 A.D.) by killing, pillaging, and committing atrocities and debaucheries.
>
> When Emperor Yang arrived at the nether world, he put his case against the House of Tang before the spirits and demanded justice. After considering the evidence, the spirits of the nether world reported to the Jade Emperor, who decided that Emperor Yang must be avenged. However, instead of decreeing that he should be reincarnated on earth to avenge himself, the Jade Emperor decided that an evil spirit should be sent to earth and let loose upon the House of Tang, and let things run their natural course. Thus it came about that the Spirit of the Heart-Moon Fox was ordered to be born on earth, and eventually to become a 'female emperor', thus confounding the principles of Ying and Yang, and settle the score with the Tang family on behalf of Emperor Yang. (24)

It is revealing that Empress Wu is inaugurated as the incarnation of the Heart-Moon Fox, a name which in Chinese mythology is associated with cunning and excessive lust.

Extremely fond of wine and gambling, she seeks to gratify her sensual passions. Arrogant and wilful, she regards herself as a paragon of humanity: "I ascended the throne as a woman. How many have done that since ancient times?" (Chapter IV)

In ancient Chinese folktales, foxes are commonly portrayed as versatile animals:

> When a fox is fifty years old, it can transform itself into a woman; when a hundred years old, it becomes a beautiful female, or a wu possessed by a spirit, or a grown-up man who has sexual intercourse with women. Such beings are able to know things at more than a thousand miles distance; they can poison men by sorcery, or possess and bewilder them, so that they lose their memory and knowledge; and when a fox is a thousand years old, it penetrates to heaven, and becomes a celestial fox.[114]

Although both male and female fox spirits can be found in traditional Chinese supernatural tales, the majority of the fox characters in the tales are female.[115] Moreover, these female fox spirits are typically depicted as lewd, selfish, greedy, cunning and are able to bewitch men and destroy their lives. So popular is this kind of stereotypical image that in modern Chinese language, hulijing (fox spirit) refers to a "bad" woman who seduces a man sexually and tricks him into giving her whatever she desires. Interestingly, this cliche

---

[114] From Xuanzhongji, quoted in Fatima Wu "Foxes in Chinese Supernatural Tales, part 1," Tamkang Review 17, 2 (Spring 1987), p. 122. The term wu in the quotation means "shaman."

[115] Ibid., p. 146.

is never used to refer to the male sex.[116]

In the narrative, despite the fact that Empress Wu institutes a new examination system for women and pronounces twelve decrees to bring them benefits, Li continually draws attention to Empress Wu's demonic attributes. She is portrayed as a wilful, suspicious, drunken vixen who is extremely cruel to her adversaries. Her thirst for political power makes her a monster who terrorizes men. In the book, Empress Wu, embodying negative and bestial qualities, emerges as the source of chaos and disorder. She becomes the underlying destructive force against which the central characters perpetually struggle. As a male character comments, "Wu is already full of iniquity and her days can be counted" (Chapter IV).

While it can be argued that Li uses Empress Wu as a veil to attack the Manchu government, it is also arguable that Li's representation of this female character as a predominately demonic figure reveals his masculine bias. Under Li's depiction, Empress Wu becomes a pervasive metaphor for the unnatural woman who not only refuses to perform the natural function of her sex, but also actively usurps male prerogatives, one of which is political power. Repeatedly, Empress Wu is associated with the violation of order. Her usurpation of the throne from the Tang emperor, her commands

---

116 Ibid., p. 146.

for all the flowers to bloom regardless of their natural timing and her choice of government officials who do not necessarily exhibit erudition all suggest that Empress Wu is a symbol of "reversing normal sequence" and a "violation of natural principles" (Chapter IV).

The last aspect regarding Li's attitude to femininity relates to the fates of the one hundred flower spirits who, at the end of the book, are all summoned back to the heavenly realm. The fact that Li puts the flower spirits back where they belong reveals his traditional Confucian orthodox belief that women should be content with the identity and roles that are prescribed for them. In the text, although Li privileges many female characters, he refuses to privilege femininity.

Although in the narrative Li features the one hundred flower spirits' noble qualities and remarkable achievements, he simultaneously conveys his anxiety about feminine power. In the text, Li conveys the feeling that for a woman to contravene her gender role or usurp male prerogatives is in fact a violation of "what is proper." Li perhaps feels that by not allowing the one hundred talented flower spirits to stay in the earthly realm where they have to compete with males for social and political power, he secures male dominance over feminine power.

In view of the representation and treatment of the female sex in the book, it is evident that Li is ambivalent about the subject of womanhood. While Li's handling of some female

characters manifests his sympathy to the plight of women, the overall narrative structure reveals his unwillingness to grant women too much power, for fear of the violation of the natural order or the misplacement between Yin and Yang. In his portrayal of the female characters in the text, Li's deeply entrenched Confucianism comes to the surface.[117] Although he asks for better treatment of women in Chinese society, Confucian ideals of feminine virtues such as obedience, chastity and filial piety never disappear from his text. His advocation of gender equality, therefore, is still secondary to the importance of preserving social harmony, which is the crux of Confucian ideology. In this sense, women are means through which Li launches his satiric attacks on the social realities of traditional China; they are the symbolization of Li's intellectual attitudes and philosophical postures within a particular cultural context.

---

[117] See Leo Tak-hung Chan "Religion and Structure in the Ching-Hua Yuan," Tamkang Review, 20, 1, (Autumn 1989), pp. 45-66 for Li's attitude to Confucianism and Taoism.

Chapter Five: Cross-cultural Comparison of the Sexual/Textual Politics in Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror

In the twentieth century, various theories of the literary text and the reading process have been advanced, reflecting the critic's need to establish a theoretical framework to account for the intricate relationship between reading and textuality. As reader-response criticism denies the stability of the text and postmodernism likewise asserts that the text is unfixed, sliding, the role of the reader in the decipherability of the text becomes pivotal. The reader is no longer a passive consumer, but an active producer of meaning. As Jonathan Culler writes, "To speak of the meaning of the work is to tell a story of reading."[118]

Since meanings are culturally bound and historically determined, different approaches in reading a text undeniably produce different interpretations, depending also, in all probability, on the reader's gender position. This raises the question: "If readers differ in their approaches to texts, how much of this difference can be attributed to gender?"[119] With a different set of methodological and theoretical assumptions, feminist criticism has entered the critical inquiry of hermeneutics and has opened up a new chapter in the history of

---

[118] Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 35.

[119] Ibid., p. 42.

literary discourse.

Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, in their analysis of the relationship between gender and the politics of literary criticism, define the role and responsibility of a feminist reader as follows:

> The feminist reader is enlisted in the process of changing the gender relations which prevail in our society, and she regards the practice of reading as one of the sites in the struggle for change. For the feminist reader there is no innocent or neutral approach to literature: all interpretation is political. Special ways of reading inevitably militate for or against the process of change. To interpret a work is always to address, whether explicitly or implicitly, certain kinds of issues about what it says.[120]

In the present study, with the premises of feminist studies, reader-response and deconstruction theories, my reading, or rather, re-reading, of Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror is marked by an awareness of the problems of gender construction in male texts. With wit and humour, both Jonathan Swift and Li Ruzhen present a series of satiric insights in different contexts, thereby conveying their philosophical outlooks and social concerns. As mentioned throughout this thesis, the subject matters under Swift and Li's satiric attacks are diverse and complex. The emphasis or focus of this thesis, however, is to analyze the satiric elements concerning women in both texts. In the

---

120 The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism,(New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 1.

concluding chapter of this thesis, I will compare the ways Swift and Li thematize women as monsters in their works and how they use the convention of satire to attack the female sex.

In Gulliver's Travels, Swift's thematization of women as monsters is especially explicit in his depiction of Gulliver's encounter with the Brobdingnagian women. In Swift's representation, the dominant image of these women is their grotesqueness and abomination: the wet nurse's "monstrous breast" with "spots, pimples and freckles," the woman beggar's cancerous breast with enormous holes and the maids of honour with disgusting body odour. Through Gulliver's microscopic male-oriented perspective, Swift not only satirizes women's physical imperfection, but also pokes fun at their social manners and sexual behaviour. For instance, while describing Gulliver's rendezvous with the Brobdingnagian queen in her chambers, Swift satirizes her eating manner:

> the Queen (who had indeed but a weak stomach) took up at one mouthful as much as a dozen English farmers could eat at a meal, which to me was for some time a very nauseous sight. She would craunch the wing of a lark, bones and all, between her teeth, although it were nine times as large as that of a full-grown turkey; and put a bit of bread in her mouth, as big as two twelve-penny loaves. She drank out of a golden cup, above a hogshead at a draught. Her knives were twice as long as a scythe set straight upon the handle. The spoons, forks, and other instruments were all in the same proportions. I remember when Glumdalclitch carried me out of curiosity to see some of the tables at court, where ten or a dozen of these enormous knives and forks were lifted up together, I thought

> I had never till then beheld so terrible a sight. (112)

While it is true that focalized through Gulliver's observations and feelings, Swift uses the unusual small-large contrast (in both Lilliput and Brobdingnag) to show the relativity of things and the changes linked with perspective, an undeniable fact is that women are a particular group frequently under Swift's satiric attack. As with the example above, the dominant image is that a woman's ordinary activity--eating--is a violent and savage act. Swift seems to mock the social decorum and decency commonly associated with women in his time.

As for Swift's attacks on female lasciviousness, the Brobdingnagian maids of honour and the Yahoo women in Houyhnhnms-land are vivid examples. The portrayal of the sixteen-year-old "frolicsome" maid of honour who sets Gulliver astride her nipples and uses many tricks in order to derive erotic pleasure (123) suggests Swift's satiric outlook on women's sexual promiscuity. Similarly, the passionate Yahoo woman who craves to have intercourse with Gulliver also creates the image of woman as the embodiment of dissoluteness. All of these examples reveal Swift's adaptation of the thematic features of Menippean satire. As in some of his scatological poems,[121] by attacking women's physicality and

---

[121] See note 87 and also Ellen Pollak, The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope, (Chicago: University

sensuality, Swift exposes the inaccuracy and hypocrisy of the conventional ideal of women as docile, chaste, and modest in his contemporary English society and its literary tradition.

In Flowers in the Mirror, Li's treatment of various female characters bears significant resemblance to Swift's presentation of female monsters in his various works, both in prose and verse. Empress Wu best exemplifies Li's patriarchal attitude to female power. One recalls that Empress Wu comes from an inferior social background, having been a concubine in the Royal Court; given favourable circumstances, she gradually assumes political power through her physical beauty. According to conventional Chinese ethics, her usurpation of power from both her husband and son is a total violation of the Confucian hierarchal order which emphasizes female submission to male dominance. Thus in the narrative, even though Li grants Empress Wu power, he demonizes her in that her behaviour is always taken to the extreme or reduced to absurdity. The fact that Empress Wu is associated with the symbol of the fox suggests Li's view that for a woman to have excessive power is like an unruly and inhuman monster who would only cause chaos and devastations to the established social order.

In the same vein, Li's portrayals of other woman

---

of Chicago Press, 1985).

characters such as the female king in the Country of Women and the bandit's wife in the Country of Double-faced are also shaded in a negative light. Li elicits the feeling that these women embody diabolical qualities because they achieve considerable power, either political or social, over men. He mocks the condition under which the traditional social hierarchal order is subverted. To a certain extent, Li's Flowers in the Mirror is a patriarchal text which bestializes women who refuse to succumb to male supremacy.

The fact that all these flower spirits leave the earth at the end of the text suggests that Li is opposed to men's preoccupation or obsession with women's physical beauty. He cautions the male readers that women are only flowers whose dominant characteristic is vanity. They are illusions which blur men's rational thinking. Worse, they are usually the source of men's problems or calamities. In this regard, Li's idea of womanhood and gender relation corresponds to Swift's ambivalence about femininity and women with power. Both writers are concerned with the potential danger of excessive male preoccupation with woman as the object of sexual desire in their cultures.

Indeed, although Swift and Li come from two distinct cultures, in their handling of women's problems in their respective texts, they bear striking similarities in their implicit acceptance of certain social customs or prejudices about women. For instance, both of them share the cultural

code that women should be modest and chaste, which is clearly shown in Swift's adversity towards the Brobdingnagian maids of honour, the Laputan wives, and the Yahoo women, and Li's positive portrayals of six flower spirits who commit suicide after the deaths of their husbands. Moreover, in terms of female power, the Brobdingnagian women in Gulliver's Travels and Empress Wu in Flowers in the Mirror suggest Swift's and Li's congruent view on the social mores that women should not be given too much authority because they would inevitably abuse it. In this sense, both Li and Swift cannot envision a relation of women to power that is not abusive and detrimental to their respective society.

Another element of similarity between Swift and Li is their use of women as conventional tropes to satirize human nature and social institutions. As for Swift, his hostility to women as manifested in Gulliver's Travels suggests his unconscious attempt to suppress female power. By using the satiric convention to attack women, Swift not only has ironically located the regions of female power--the body, the mind, the odour, beauty and sex but also reveals his anxiety about the things that he fears most. In this sense, Swift's representation of women in his work may simply be, to a certain extent, a product of eighteenth-century English society.

In his portrayal of Empress Wu as a symbol of disorder, Li attacks the Manchu government indirectly and conveys his

patriotic view that because the Manchus are from a non-Chinese race, their government of China would only bring in confusion and create disharmony in the society.

Even the flower spirits in Li's text are a medium of exchange and a product of satiric convention. In terms of their positions in the story, they can be seen as the "others," things which are deprived of true identity. Under Li's depiction, the reader gets the feeling that women are just a means through which men attain their ultimate goals, and thus the value of women's existence is defined by this purpose. One recalls that at the very beginning of the story, Tang Ao is warned by an oracle in a dream that the only way for him to achieve his life-long goal, that is, to obtain Taoist immortality, is by rescuing the dispersed flower spirits from adversities and gathering them together. In the course of his adventures overseas, Tang Ao not only financially assists the poor girls in need, but also physically rescues those who are in captivity. As a tribute to Tang Ao's benevolence, the incarnated flower spirits all decide to accompany their benefactor and offer him help whenever necessary. In this way, Tang Ao fulfils his mission and eventually attains Taoist immortality. In contemporary terminology, one might say that the female flower spirits are the signifier who help Tang Ao to arrive at the Tao, which, in the Chinese tradition, occupies that of the Western logos--the

signified.[122]

From this perspective, the incarnated flower spirits are merely navigators who direct Tang Ao to his wish. After Tang Ao has achieved his goal, they are no longer useful and their reason for existence also vanishes. Their eventual disappearance from the earth, in a sense, reveals Li's masculine outlook that women's primary mission on earth is to help men to achieve their ultimate desires. Once this purpose is achieved, the value of their existence also ceases.

From another perspective, it is also possible that Li, through granting the flower spirits outstanding attributes, both intellectually and morally, attacks the mediocre intellectuals (predominantly male) who have withdrawn from the resistance against the Manchu regime and shifted their allegiance to the usurper of political power in China.

Of course it is undeniable that there are distinctions between Swift's and Li's world views, their attitudes towards their culture as well as their ways of thinking, which are due to the spirit and the temperaments of their time; however, the manners in which both of them use women instrumentally for satiric purpose in their texts reveal the intimate relationship between gender and the formal, thematic features

---

[122] For resent studies on the relationship between the Tao and the Western logos, see Shaobo Xie and John(Zhong)M. Chen, "Jacques Derrida and Chuang Tzu: Some Analogies in Their Deconstructionist Discourse on Language and Truth," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, 19,3(September 1992), pp.363-76 and in the same issue Peide Zha, "Logocentrism and Traditional Chinese Poetics," pp. 377-94.

of a literary work.

Since satire in world literature makes use of various kinds of medley and mixture, it is clear that Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror exhibit their authors' manipulation of generic traits of satire to bring out themes of social significance. In both texts, one sees an interplay of different genres, forms and structures which creates the impression of inconsistency and sometimes even contradiction. Through adopting the convention of satire, both Swift and Li use women as objects or as targets of attack to expose social contradictions. They subvert, pervert and invert various dimensions of established order--social, sexual, political and cultural. The resulting incongruity in both texts thus produces the ridicule, wit, and humour which one identifies with satires.

The fact that ambiguities of meanings permeate both texts suggests that Swift and Li may not be always conscious of what they attack and criticize. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to fathom the conscious and unconscious assumptions of the social and ethical codes by which these two writers abide.

In Flowers in the Mirror, although Li does not marginalize the roles of many female characters, he nevertheless reinstates the Confucian value system about womanhood in his demonization of female power. Moreover, while he is sensitive to the injustice that Chinese women

bore, he seems careful not to deviate from or upset the cultural codes governing the existence of women in his time. Hence the reader gets the feeling of ambiguities and even contradictions throughout Li's treatment of sexual politics in his work.

Another point related to Li's unconscious adherence to his predominately Confucian Chinese culture is about his inability to provide any substantive remedy for the gender-related problems in traditional Chinese society. In the text, Li occasionally reveals his awakening of his conscience with regard to the inequality, cruelty, and dehumanized treatment that women have endured; however, his proposed solution does not go beyond gender reversal. By reverting the roles between men and women, Li invites the male reader to experience how women suffer in society. But nowhere in the text can one detect any constructive view or solution such as the intellectual rapport between men and women to close the gender gap so that men and women do not have to stand on opposite ends. In this regard, Li's seemingly feminist ideology which some literary critics compliment is indeed very limited in scope.

Viewed together, both Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Li's Flowers in the Mirror lend themselves to a variety of approaches, depending on which ideological or theoretical perspective the reader adopts. My twentieth-century reading of Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror, in the

context of feminist studies, deconstruction and reader-response theories, has not only allowed me to see the ways in which literature encodes and disseminates cultural values, but also the implications of gender within the hidden or unexplained hierarchal structure in the texts. In the process of my exercise, I have found that in spite of cultural, geographical, and social differences in these two texts, both works do contain universal themes such as human nature, social relations, textual/sexual politics which allow for a comparative study. And as long as Gulliver's Travels and Flowers in the Mirror are concretized by a particular reader or reader groups in a particular social and cultural environment, the meanings of both texts will continue to draw new interpretations.

Selected Bibliography

1. Primary Sources of Flowers in the Mirror

Li, Ruzhen. Jinghuayuan. Taipei: Zhiyang chuban she, 1992.

Lin, Tai-yi. Flowers in the Mirror. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965.

2. Secondary Sources of Flowers in the Mirror

Aldridge, A. Owen. "Utopianism in World Literature." Tamkang Review 14.1 (1983): 11-29.

Bauer, Wolfgang. "The Wonder Lands of Li Ju-chen." China and the Search for Happiness, tran. Michael Shaw. New York: Seabury Press, 1976, 263-69.

Brandauer, F.P. "Women in the Ching-hua yuan: Emancipation toward a Confucian Ideal." Journal of Asian Studies 36.4 (1977): 647-60.

----------. "Realism, Satire, and the Ju-lin Wai-Shih." Tamkang Review 20.1 (1989): 1-21.

Chan, Leo Tak-hung. "Religion and Structure in the Ching-Hua Yuan." Tamkang Review 20.1 (1989): 45-66.

Chang, H. C. Chinese Literature: Popular Fiction and Drama. Edinburgh: R & R Clark. 1973.

----------. Allegory and Courtesy in Spenser: A Chinese View. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1955.

Chen, Wangdao. "Jinghuayuan he funu wenti" ("Jinghuayuan and Women's Problems"), in his Wangdao Wenji. N.p.: Duzhe Shufang, 1936, 135-54.

Eberhard, Wolfram. "Ideas About Social Reforms in the Novel Ching-hua Yuan." Moral and Social Values of the Chinese. Taipei: 1971, 413-21.

Evans, Nancy J.F. "Social Criticism in the Ch'ing: The Novel of Ching-hua Yuan." Papers on China 23 (1970): 52-66.

Gibbs, Donald A. "Notes on the Wind: The Term 'Feng' in Chinese Literary Criticism." Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture. Hong

Kong: Cathay Press, 1972, 285-93.

Goldman, Merle. Chinese Intellectuals. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Hsia, Aian. "The Popular Novel in Nineteeth-Century China." Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 9.3 (September 1982): 461-69.

Hsia, C.T. "The Scholar-Novelist and Chinese Culture: A Re-appraisal of Ching-hua yuan." Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays. Ed. Andrew H. Plaks. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, 266-305.

Hu, Shi. "A Chinese Declaration of the Rights of Women." Chinese Social and Political Science Review 8.2 (1924): 100-9.

-------. "A Chinese 'Gulliver' on Women's Rights (the Jinghuayuan)." People's Tribune n.s. 7 (1934): 121-7.

Kao, Hsin-Sheng. Li Ju-chen. Boston: Twayne, 1981.

----------. "On Narrative Digression and Nonsequential Interpolation: Comparative Study of Works by Li Ju-chen and Melville." Tamkang Review 18.1 (1987): 65-83.

Li, Chang-chih. "Some Notes on Flowers in the Mirror". Chinese Literature 1 (January-February 1958): 144-48.

Lin, Yutang. "Feminist Thought in Ancient China." Tien Hsia Monthly 1.2 (September 1935): 127-50.

Lin, Ti-yi. "Introduction to Ching-hua yuan," in Flowers in the Mirror. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, 5-13.

Lu, Xun. A Brief History of Chinese Fiction. Trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1964.

Ming, Lai. "The Novel of Ideas: Flowers in the Mirror", in his A History of Chinese Literature. New York: Capricorn Books, 1966, 340-45.

Ropp, Paul S. Dissent in Early Modern China: Ju-lin Wai-shih and Ch'ing Social Criticism. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981.

----------. "The Seeds of Change: Reflections on the

Condition of Women in the Early and Mid Ch'ing," Signs 2.1 (Autumn 1976): 5-23.

Voskesensky, D.N. "Utopian Motifs in Chinese Fiction of the Seventeenth Century: The Theme of the Search for a Blissful Land." Tamkang Review 8.2 (1977): 133-46.

Wang, Pi-twan Huang. "Utopian Imagination in Traditional Chinese Fiction." Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1980.

Wong, Timothy. Wu Ching-Tzu. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978.

Wu, Fatima. "Foxes in Chinese Supernatural Tales. Part 1." Tamkang Review 17.2 (Spring 1987): 121-54.

Wu, Jingzi. The Scholars. Trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1957.

Xu, Shinian. "Luetan Jinghuayuan." (A Brief Discussion on Flowers in the Mirror) Chungguo gudian xiaoshuo pinglun shi. Beijing: Beijing chuban she, 1957, 156-69.

Yang, Wiston L.Y. Introduction. Flowers in the Mirror. Eds. W. L. Y. Yang, et al., Classical Chinese Fiction. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978, 78-83.

Yip, Terry Siu-han. "The Juxtaposition of Utopia and Dystopia in Chinese and English Literature: A Comparative Study of Flowers in the Mirror and Gulliver's Travels." Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, vol. 2. Munich, 1990, 467-72.

Yue, Hengjun. "Penglai guixishi: lun Jinghuayuan de shijieguan" (The Absurd Drama of Penglai: Comments on Jinghuayuan's World View). Xiandai Wenxue 49 (1973): 92-105.

Zhang, Aidong. "Critical Discourse on Flowers in the Mirror." MA Thesis. McGill University, 1991.

3. Primary Source of Gulliver's Travels

Swift, Jonathan. Gulliver's Travels. Ed. and intro. Miriam Kash Starkman. New York: Bantham Books,

1986.

4. Secondary Sources of Gulliver's Travels

Clifford, James. "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage: 'Hard' and 'Soft' Schools of Interpretation." Quick Springs of Sense: Studies in the Eighteenth Century. Ed. Larry Champion. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974, 33-49.

Davis, Herbert, ed. The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift. Oxford: Blackwell, 1937-74.

Eddy, William A. Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963.

Greenacre, Phyllis. Swift and Carroll. New York: International Universities Press, 1955.

----------. "Gulliver and Swift." Modern Critical Interpretations: Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986, 21-35.

Lee, Jae Num. Swift and Scatological Satire. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

Mezciems, Jenny. "The Unity of Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa': Structure as Meaning in Utopian Fiction." Modern Language Review 72.1 (1977): 1-21.

Murry, John Middleton. Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography, New York: Noonday Press, 1955.

Nicolson, Marjorie and Nora M. Mohler. "Swift's 'Flying Island' in the Voyage to Laputa." Annals of Science 2 (1937): 409-30.

----------. "The Scientific Background of Swift's Voyage to Laputa." Annals of Science 2 (1937): 299-334.

Rawson, Claude. The Character of Swift's Satire. New York: University of Delaware Press, 1983.

Salvaggo, Ruth. "Swift and Psychoanalysis, Language and Women." Women's Studies 15 (1988): 417-34.

Smith, Frederik N., ed. The Genres of Gulliver's Travels.

Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990.

Tuveon, Ernest, ed. Swift: a Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964.

Vieth, David. Introduction. "A Symposium on Women in Swift's Poems: Vaness, Stella, Lady Acheson, and Celia." PLL 14 (1978): 115-6.

Wedel, T.O. "On the Philosophical Background of Gulliver's Travels." Studies in Philology 23.4 (1926): 434-50.

Willias, Kathleen, ed. Swift: The Critical Heritage. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970.

Williams, Harold, ed. The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift: 1724-1731, vol. 3, Oxford University Press, 1963.

5. Theoretical References

a. Genre Theories

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Tran. R.W. Rostsel. N.p.: Ardis, 1973.

Brady, Frank, John Palmer, and Martin Price, eds. Literary Theory and Structure: Essays in Honor of William K. Wimsatt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

Cuddon, J.A., ed. A Dictionary of Literary Terms. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Culler, Jonathan. On Deconstruction. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Elliott, Robert C. The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960.

Feinberg, Leonard. Introduction to Satire. Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1967.

Fowler, Alastair. Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Frye, Northrop. "Varieties of Literary Utopias." Utopias and Utopian Thought. Ed. Frank E. Manual. Massachusetts: The River Side Press, 1966, 25-49.

----------. Anatomy of Criticism. New York: Atheneum, 1967.

Guilhamet, Leon. Satire and the Transformation of Genre. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.

Hirsch, Eric Donald. Validity in Interpretation. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.

Kirk, Eugene P. Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism. New York: Garland, 1980.

Marino, Adrian. "Toward A Definition of Literary Genres." Theories of Literary Genre. Ed. Joseph P. Strelka. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, 41-56.

Nussbaum, Felicity. The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on omen 1660-1750. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1984.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Some Reflections on Satire." Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Ronald Paulson. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 360-78.

Sutherand, James. English Satire. Cambridge: University Press, 1958.

Watson, George, ed. Of Dramatic Posey and Other Critical Essays. London: J.M. Dent., 1962.

b. Gender Theories

Belsey, Catherine, and Jane Moore, eds. The Feminist Reader: Essays in Genders and the Politics of Literary Criticism. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Carretta, Vincent. "The Satirists Swift and Pope Reassessed." Review 9 (1987): 295-300.

Ellmann, Mary. Thinking About Women. New York: Harcourt, 1968.

Fetterley, Judith. The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Fish, Stanley. Is There a Text in This Class? Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Flynn, Elizabeth A. and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, eds. Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Gabriel, Susan L. "Gender, Text, and Meaning." Papers on Language and Literature 24.3 (Summer 1988): 223-35.

Gallop, Jane. The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Greene, Gayle and Coppelia Kahn. Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism. New York: Methuen, 1985.

Gubar, Susan. "The Female Monster in Augustan Satire." Signs 3 (Winter 1977): 380-94.

Holbrook, David. Images of Woman in Literature. New York: University Press, 1989.

Humm, Maggie. Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.

Jacous, Mary. Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Kolodny, Annette. "A Map for Rereading: Gender and Interpretation of Literary Texts." New Literary History 11. 3 (Spring 1980): 451-67.

Kristeva, Julia. About Chinese Women. New York: Marion Boyars, 1977.

Liu, Lydia H. "The Female Tradition in Modern Chinese Literature: Negotiating Feminism Across East/West Boundaries." Genders 12 (Winter 1991): 22-44.

McConnell-Ginet, Sally, Ruth Borker, and Nelly Furman, eds. Women and Language in Literature and Society. New York: Praeger, 1980.

Millett, Kate. Sexual Politics. New York: Avon Books, 1969.

Modleski, Tania. "Feminism and the Power of Interpretation: Some Critical Readings." Feminist Studies: Critical Studies. Ed. Teresa de Lauretis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, 121-38.

Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary

Theory. London: Methuen, 1965.

Pollak, Ellen. The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Poe. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Showalter, Elaine. "Feminism and Literature." Literary Theory Today. Eds. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-ryan. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

----------. The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.

Stimpson, Catharine. Where the Meanings Are. New York: Methuen, 1988.

Appendix: Pinyin to Wade-Giles Conversion Table

Pinyin	Wade-Giles
Ban Zhao	Pan Chao
Dao	Tao
Daoism	Taoism
Hu Shi	Hu Shih
Jinghuayuan	Ching-hua yüan
Li Ruzhen	Li Ju-chen
Nujie	Nu-chieh
Qing	Ch'ing
Qing Dynasty	Ch'ing Dynasty
Rulin Waishi	Ju-lin Wai-shih
Wu Jingzi	Wu Ching-tzu